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Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

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First Session, 34th Parliament

Monday, October 3, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

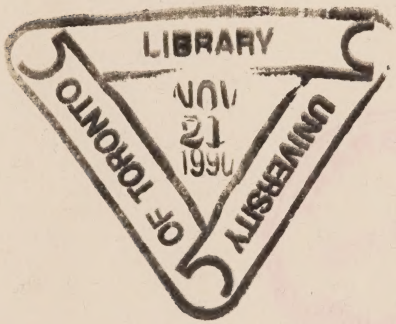
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, October 3, 1988

The committee met at 10:05 a.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO
(continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open this session of the select committee on education. If members would take their seats in the next minute or so, we will get started.

We are continuing our review of the organization of the education process in Ontario and we are pleased to welcome this morning the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Welcome to our committee. We have allocated one hour for your presentation time, so we are hoping there will be plenty of time for members' questions during the course of that hour. Please start whenever you are ready and begin by identifying yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. Clemens: Good morning. My name is Jack Clemens. I am with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and I am vice-chairman of the education policy committee. I have with me this morning Cheryl Craig, who is also a member of our education policy committee.

On behalf of the Ontario chamber, we thank you for this opportunity of meeting with you again. The quality of education in Ontario is certainly an issue that elicits comments from virtually all parts of our provincial community. It might be said that apart from birth and death, it is one of the few experiences in which all of us take part. Your task is not an easy one, given the vital stake most individuals have in the education system and the diversity of goals each individual has for the system.

In our last meeting with you, the Ontario chamber's goal for the education system was clearly stated, that was employability, achieved through the development of proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics. I would like to digress for a moment. I think that from some of the reports after our presentation, we may have left the impression that employability meant only that amount of comprehension or numeracy that was required to get a job, but what we really intended was that employability exists in all aspects of our lives. All of us in this room today were educated for employability. So it is broader than just the numeracy and the comprehension we were speaking about. It is really preparing people for life's work.

Our goal has not really changed from employability. We continue to believe the emphasis must be placed on the measurable goals of attainment in the system, in the area of literacy and numeracy, especially at the elementary school level.

I believe a number of questions were left unanswered at our last meeting and we will try to address some of these today.

At the outset, we wish to place on the record our respect for the many dedicated teachers, counsellors, administrators and support staff in our education system and their support team in the public service. We know that most individuals in the education system are dedicated professionals committed to their work and the students they serve. Two of the problems faced in the present system were identified in our last meeting with you. The first was the absence of clear measures of achievement and the second was system overload.

While everyone might not necessarily have liked it at the time, in our opinion, it is good for an individual to know where he or she stands. With rare exceptions, reality comes crashing in on each one of us at some point, and that reality is indeed easier to bear if we have not been excessively shielded from it for prolonged periods of time. With that as a prelude, you will not be surprised to learn that we support some form of standardized testing and the right to fail. When we talk about standardized testing, this does not mean departmental examinations as we once knew them.

Failure, however, can occur only if there are standards which one cannot meet. To the best of our knowledge, for example, the Ministry of Education has not developed standardized reading tests. As indicated in our previous meeting, literacy is a major concern of the chamber. Recently we heard that six million Canadians were functionally illiterate. We believe that the ministry should have available and encourage the use of standardized reading tests throughout the province. We propose that this be done by

identifying the grade level or age at which a pupil should be able to read and comprehend certain works of literature, and by developing independent paragraphs for that same purpose. The use of such materials could also be useful in identifying at an earlier age students in need of remediation.

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Such materials could provide teachers with another measurement tool in forming their assessment of a pupil's achievements while also offering an objective, common assessment of literacy standards across this province.

But let us be clear. We believe that the skills exist to formulate reading samples that would assess literacy standards at all age or grade levels while compensating for the diverse backgrounds of Ontario students. We also believe that similar measurables could be developed in other key areas.

With such tests in place, pupils could and should be held back or failed if they are unable to meet those standards. We recognize that in recent years the common wisdom has been that a doubtfully promoted student will catch up and that the benefits to the pupil of remaining with his or her peer group outweigh the academic disadvantages. We are of the opinion, however, that in the long term the student is best served when needed remedial action is taken as soon as possible.

If remediation during the course of the year has not enabled the student to reach the standard, then remediation during the summer vacation period or through a repeated year should be undertaken. We believe it is necessary to master one level before moving on to the next.

It occurs to us that one advantage of the year-round semester system currently under study would be the possibility of repeating courses or taking remedial classes without undue attention to the students in this position by their peers.

Referring to our recommendation that the ministry undertake to assess sample texts as an age-grade level at which students should be able to read them, we would extend this recommendation and request that the ministry provide similar assessment of popular children's literature, such as Jacob Two-Two or the Dr. Seuss books, for use by parents. This would enable interested parents to participate more actively in their child's education and might possibly remove some of the remediation burden from the school system.

In fact, we believe it would be helpful to both parents and the school system if the Ministry of Education were to develop remedial packages for use by parents in a wide variety of grade and subject levels. Sponsors from appropriate sectors of the community might be sought for such kits and they could be sold directly or loaned through the public library system or the schools to interested parents. No one should be led to believe that such kits would be 100 per cent guaranteed, but they could provide a way for parents to help their children and see how their child is progressing.

In our view, if students have a thorough grounding in the basics, streaming will likely become less of an issue as more students will be capable of entering the advanced level. We decry, however, the continued equation of advanced-level courses with future success. Advanced-level courses are primarily academic courses leading to university admission. Frankly, intensive remediation will never result in all pupils being university candidates, nor should it, unless we intend to require a university education for all jobs. Streaming is an effective way of accommodating variable levels of ability and varying interests.

All students graduating from a secondary institution should have measured achievements. Regardless of the type of program they have taken, they should be able to read, write, think, analyse and perform basic mathematical calculations. They should be immediately employable or eligible for further education. Depending on the program followed, every graduate should be qualified to pursue further education at a community college, university or apprenticeship. These options should be recognized as choices and the ranking of the three against each other eliminated.

Some have recommended that streaming be eliminated or postponed to higher grade levels so that late bloomers would not be penalized. We would point out that some are also penalized by misguided efforts to place them in the advanced stream where they are unable to keep up.

Until the basics are measurably a part of the system, we recommend that streaming be retained, focusing on the legitimate option or choice nature of each stream, while at the same time developing improved means to enable students to transfer from one stream to another. We also believe it is important for each student to understand the choices available at the end of each stream.

We have concentrated on our two themes of back to the basics and building on the basics. In doing so, we invite the inevitable question: What then is on our hit list? What do we want to get rid of in the curriculum? What would we sacrifice? The answer is equally basic: The decision lies with the education professionals.

Classroom sessions should have more than one purpose. We believe in the simple concept of cross-curriculum teaching. Topic-oriented subjects should provide information and assist in the development of communication skills. We believe, for example, that a well taught class on the topic of water pollution can be informative by providing information about the nature of the problem and by developing good communication skills. While this might require teachers to develop additional skills which are not part of traditional training, cross-curriculum teaching is an effective methodology.

At this juncture, we also note that no review of the educational system in the province would be complete without a consideration of teacher training. With the changing needs of the school system, we believe it only appropriate that a review of the entry requirements, curriculum–possibly to include emphasis on cross-curriculum teaching–and certification procedures for teachers be undertaken as well. We also propose that consideration be given to developing certification programs for teachers' aides, to enable these individuals to undertake more specific and productive roles within the education system. Measures such as placing greater emphasis on cross-curriculum teaching and developing a more substantive role for teachers' aides would assist in addressing the problem of system overload.

A further proposal that we would be interested in pursuing is the development of a data bank of educational resource materials outside the school system that could be made available to teachers. Many community organizations such as local history societies and conservation groups have material suitable for classroom use, as do many business organizations and individual companies. A catalogue of this material could be useful as a resource for teachers.

Further, we note that the seventh Ontario Institute for Studies in Education survey of educational issues, which was administered in September, will sample public opinion on a number of these areas, including streaming and student assessment at the secondary level. We look forward to the results of that survey, due in December. We believe that your committee will also find the results of that survey of interest as you deliberate the direction of education in Ontario.

Thank you very much. We would be prepared now to answer any questions that the members may have.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We have quite a substantial amount of time for questions, which is just as well, because we have a number of members who have indicated that they have them. Mr. Jackson, followed by Mr. Reycraft, followed by Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. Jackson: I would like to welcome the members of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. It is a brief that we have been anticipating and appreciate very much, recognizing the role the chamber plays as a main catalyst for employment in this province. Therefore, your comments are most relevant with respect to our graduates.

I guess I was looking within your brief for some more direct responses to the Radwanski report, although you have stayed on topic. We appreciate that very much, but I had anticipated that you might have gone a little further.

However, let me ask you a bit about the process. You have educational committees throughout your chamber. Were they given an opportunity to present concerns? What was the method by which your chamber was able to participate in providing input to this brief?

Mr. Clemens: In the chamber, the education policy committee really is in regular contact with the various chambers throughout the province. From time to time, we ask for their views on many areas. In the specific area of education, our chambers have many times relayed to us their concern with the areas we are talking about. We represent, of course, large business, medium business and small business, but time and again, especially with those who are coming out of the high school system, there is the whole topic of literacy, comprehension and numeracy, because these are, in the main, small business people who are the recipients of these graduates. So there is sort of an ongoing dialogue in the area that we are addressing here.

Mr. Jackson: I know from personal experience, because I serve on the Burlington Chamber of Commerce education and student services committee, there is quite an extensive representation from education. As well, there is a growing number of school boards that are members of the chamber, given the fact that they are involved in a lot of economic activities within the community over and above just simply teaching.

Can you indicate in a more general sense the kind of shift that is occurring within the chambers in terms of their closer liaison with school boards and some of the kinds of projects they are working on?

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Mr. Clemens: I guess about two years ago we surveyed the chambers. What we did at that time was to ask them to give to us the number of activities, the types of things they are actually doing at their local levels. We did get quite a few replies on that. We then indeed published that and sent it to the chambers as an indication of what was going on in the various chambers, really as a guide for them to say, "Maybe you would like to pick up and work with your local people."

As a policy committee, we do not mandate, of course, what they should do. I can tell you, though, that in certain areas there are very active education committees of the chambers. I think Cheryl has been quite involved in some of this and maybe she would like to expand on it.

Ms. Craig: Several years ago, we attempted, with the co-operation of our then director of education, to develop more open lines of communication with our local school board. It has resulted in an excellent rapport between the educators and the business community. We have very successfully been running a career day for several years now. We submitted our project through to the Ontario chamber. They looked at it and we were told it was one of the best functions in the province in terms of lines of communication being opened between the two groups and also forming an opportunity for information gathering for students.

There have been some very good programs. I can only speak on that one from a personal perspective, but there definitely has been an effort to keep a good rapport going.

Mr. Jackson: Perhaps I could ask you to look in an area which has been raised with respect to students and employment during their secondary school experience. This point has been raised with groups similar to yours. We recognize the legal limitations for government to become involved in determining hours of work for students at or above the age of 16. We understand the limitations of the law in that regard as we now know it.

However, there have been some very strong arguments presented about one point. We have had a former educator come before us to indicate that a major contributor to the dropout rate is the competition for jobs and the desire to go out and work and the encouragement to go out and seek employment while they are attending school. We have heard from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, a survey which said that with the demographics in society today and the way commerce is, we are literally sucking students out of our schools.

Have you formulated some stronger opinions or are you willing to come forward with some comments today on those two points and what, if any, role the chamber might have to assist school boards in that regard in terms of those two identified phenomena?

Mr. Clemens: I think there are two areas. The one I would like to comment on is the bill I think you were referring to, to some extent, the co-op education. Co-op education is certainly a growing and very viable form of introducing young people to the workplace while they are actually going to school. That is valuable.

I think the other role you are referring to is the student who leaves school before he necessarily completes whatever we say is completion and goes to work. I guess if we look at that in a free society, a democratic society, that is the right of an individual. I think the business community has been accused from time to time of actually encouraging that. I do not know whether that is right or wrong, because we cannot tap into our membership, but if that student seeks to leave and go to work, I guess that is the freedom of that student to do so. I do not think the chamber itself can formulate a policy to try to direct its people to hire or not to hire those people.

Mr. Jackson: The reason I raise that is that we are getting a clearer picture of a sort of revolving door syndrome where a student leaves school and the employer indicates some concerns about some weaknesses in his levels for reading, communication, math skills and so on. The school then gets into a cyclical thing where it is trying to reach out and bring the student back into the school—we are now referring to those as dropins instead of dropouts—to involve itself with the student in some form of upgrade or strengthening of skills, booster programs, we call them a variety of things.

I, for one, do not suggest that it is small business's fault that we have a severe labour shortage and that students and young people fulfil a significant portion of that market. I do not indict any one group for that. That is a phenomenon that has occurred as a result of birth demographics and a variety of other things that we cannot go back and correct. However, clearly there is an area in this very critical area of

dropouts and mastery levels of learning and its interrelationship with the school system. It also touches on how we structure our semestered schools so that we can work more closely with industry to take a student back into the system.

I wonder if the chamber has had an opportunity to look in more detail into those kinds of programs, where they exist in other jurisdictions outside of Ontario, to address this problem. If in fact your network within this country or within the continent has allowed you an opportunity to raise that question, because certainly it is now coming more to the forefront as a question that academics are asking among themselves, but I would suspect that the chamber by its nature would not want to just continue identifying a problem. It would want to look at where in North America they have challenged that problem and come up with some solutions. We are starting to hear a few of those jurisdictions. I wonder if there is any way in which the chamber could assist us in seeking out those solutions, wherever they may be.

Mr. Clemens: I think that is a big question. I guess it comes down to what the chamber sees as its role. With respect to what we are saying in our brief, I respond to that first because I think when we are talking about the dropbacks or the re-education, our brief is really addressing trying to get at that fundamental development of those skills before the person goes to work. There is not a necessity to drop back.

I think what we fail to do is to provide, certainly in comprehension, literacy, numeracy, whatever you want to call it, those basic skills a person needs to go out and become employable or go on to college or on to university. That is where we start. In the meantime, maybe it is a question of what we do about those people who escaped from the system. We do not really have a mandate, I guess, as an Ontario chamber to go beyond Ontario. Maybe we should, but we all know that education is a provincial matter.

While on the federal scene there is the Canadian chamber, it has an education committee but I do not think I would say it was one that was looking across the country to see where the solutions are to some of our problems. It is not a thing that we have become involved in as an Ontario chamber. Maybe we should be more knowledgeable about that, but I guess the solution to me really is with educational professionals; we do not profess to be educational professionals.

The ministries of education in Canada are a vehicle that one could well see as that kind of a co-ordinating body because it does include all the ministries in Canada.

Mr. Jackson: I will yield to other members, but we still have half an hour left. I guess Ontario is unique in terms of the fact that we have the fastest-moving economy in the country. There are other provinces with severe unemployment problems where the youth unemployment figures are twice as bad as ours, yet there are more strategies in place involving the chamber and various government ministries and not dealing with education in isolation. Perhaps it is this healthy economy which is sucking students out of the school instead of the frustration and other factors which may be more prevalent in other provinces.

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I would hope it is something the Ontario chamber would raise at the national chamber level and perhaps in some forum within the national chamber organization there could be some tabulating of opinions as to how each of the chambers is interrelating with the government. Each province would, of course, be unique but there are some common concerns with respect to how we are graduating our students, for what purpose and how we are using the educational system to rightfully educate as opposed to calling upon the private sector to do that re-education.

I will yield at the moment, but if there is time permitting I would like to come back.

Mr. Clemens: If I might comment on that, I guess we are all aware of the project now under way in Ontario looking at the whole question of dropouts and so on. I think it is a very complex issue: people are not dropping out for only one reason. If we can get some direction out of that particular group, I think it may be very useful.

Ms. Craig: May I add one other comment to that? I believe this province offers some upgrading programs for people–I am not sure of the name of the program; I think it is called the Futures program–and it is quite effective. I have dealt with the end result of the program and it works. It is a good program, but it does not address the whole problem; you are right.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Jackson, if time does permit at the end of the questioning, we will go back to you for a final one.

Mr. Reycraft: I want to focus a couple of questions on the standardized testing issue. Mr. Clemens, when you were reading the brief you made an aside that when you were advocating for a standardized testing you were not suggesting that we return to departmental examinations, but

departmental examinations were a form of standardized testing and students had to pass those tests or examinations in order to achieve a secondary school graduation diploma. If it is not that kind of testing you are talking about, what is it you are advocating?

Mr. Clemens: What we are advocating, really, is that at any particular level I think there can be developed materials which say that if a person can read and understand, comprehend and perhaps write a paragraph about what they read, at whatever age or grade level that is, that would be comprehending at that age or grade level. There are some tests available today in the business world that would be tests of learning ability which do not ask what grade people went to in school but what they are capable of learning; if they are capable of reading a certain paragraph or whatever it may be, they are reading at a grade-whatever level. That is what we are really talking about in standardized testing.

I am not saying we are totally against all kinds of grade 12 or 13 testing, but sometimes it is a mistake to think that because those tests were written at one time, that in itself should be returned to. I am not sure that should, in truth, be the total answer to it.

Mr. Reycraft: What do you see as being the application of the results from that kind of testing? How would schools, teachers, communities or businesses use that information?

Mr. Clemens: The school itself is the point at which it will be used; if the person is reading below what is traditionally accepted to be at that level, say at grade 5 or 6, then I think you can begin to help that student with some remediation, whether that be done within the system, whether that be also a clear indication to the parent, if the parent wishes to help that person to develop those skills, to bring that person up that level, or it may be summer remediation, whatever it is; trying to identify that situation as it is occurring.

We had some statistics last time which I believe showed that something like 40 per cent of the young people entering Humber College over a three-year period, from about 1985 to 1987, were reading and comprehending below the grade 12 level, although all of those had a grade 12 certificate or better. Seventeen per cent were comprehending below the grade 8 level.

Our point is that if you found that at grade 7 or grade 8, you could do something about it then rather than waiting until grade 12 to find out they are reading much below their level.

Mr. Reycraft: From my experience, I believe most schools do have that kind of test instrumentation available to them. Most schools use them, either in a standardized test application in a group form for classes or in the individualized format, to assess the abilities or disabilities of students who are having difficulty.

If you make the kind of application of the information that you have suggested, to use it as a basis for remediation to identify first of all the need for remediation, I do not see that as being a significant departure from what is happening right now. Am I missing the point?

Mr. Clemens: I guess I can only answer that if we find the statistics available to us, Humber College is not the only one. In our response to the Radwanski report Mr. Jackson referred to, the conservative estimate is that maybe 30 to 35 per cent of the community college people who are entering first year cannot comprehend at the grade 12 level.

If that remediation has been there and the testing is there, then I do not think it really is indicated by the final result. They just do not seem to be able to comprehend at that level.

Mr. Reycraft: Certainly, I think all educators want to help kids learn to read to the greatest extent possible, but I have to say, too, that I am not sure whether the Humber College incident is the one that I have in mind or not.

There was an entrance test of some kind administered a couple of years ago that showed some very sensational results, indicating that the students were very low on reading abilities. There was a follow-up story about two months later indicating that errors had been made in the marking of the test and there were new data available.

The follow-up story, of course, appeared on page 6 in small print. There was not much of a headline. I do not think there was a great deal of attention paid to it. That may not be the Humber College situation to which you are referring, but I am not sure that it is not.

I am not sure, then, whether administering a standardized test is going to substantially increase the number of kids who score at grade 12 or higher on that kind of examination. But if you are suggesting that students should have to meet that grade 12 level standard before they obtain their credit or before they got their graduation diploma, then I see that as being a completely different application of the test results. I really see that as being a form of the old departmental examinations.

Mr. Clemens: It may be a form of it. I guess what we are really saying in many respects is that we believe this should start in the elementary

system because it is a lot easier to improve in these areas if the deviation from the norm is not that great. I think the deviation becomes much greater the longer it goes on.

As a result of that, we know that if it is based at the whole area of comprehension, then it permits the person to do a lot of self-studying. So it is not only English we are talking about. It is the ability to read history, geography and what not. It is really trying to remedy that deviation at the earliest possible time so that you then correct that and bring the student up and go on.

I think in all the educational training that we see in whatever, whether it be business, industry or government, people are tested to some extent. In the apprentice programs we have, people must demonstrate their capabilities, as an example, to do whatever that trade is at a certain point in time, whether it be welding, pipe fitting or whatever. There is a test applied. If the person cannot meet the test, then you do have to go back and train some more or educate some more.

Essentially, it is a very simple concept. It is more difficult to put that into practice when trying to help that student come up to that level over the period of time so that, indeed, when they arrive at grade 12, if that is where they arrive, or at university, they do have that capability.

There has been some work done, we know, on entrance tests to universities, as well, that has indicated some deficiency in the training of those young people. I was just saying community college. I think those who have gone to university we are seeing to a lot lesser extent because they have followed the academic programs.

Mr. Reycraft: There is certainly a vast array of standardized tests available to schools and to teachers. The current policy is that individual boards, schools and teachers have the right to make their own choice as to which of those they use. I am sure you are not suggesting that schools do not already make use of those standardized tests for assessment or diagnostic purposes so that they know better how to be able to help kids learn to read and compute in a better way.

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I do not think we should let anybody think that application of a single standardized test across any particular grade is going to automatically result in kids being able to read any better. All it will do is tell us what we already know, that a lot of them do not learn to read as well as many people would like.

If I can move to another topic just briefly, you make a suggestion that one advantage of the semester system is the possibility of repeating courses. Semestering is used only in secondary schools, and kids do fail in secondary schools. They fail credits rather than grades, of course, so the possibility of repeating courses is there and it happens quite often. I am just not sure what it is you are suggesting when you point out that possible advantage.

Mr. Clemens: I think what we are looking at is in terms of time. If you think of a student in, let's say, grade 9, so-called failing the year of grade 9, he does not enter grade 9 again until the following fall, so he is, essentially, at that point with the comparable grade 8s who have come to grade 9. I guess if you are looking at semestering, you can see a shorter time interval between the time that person might repeat that year or those courses. We recognize, of course, that in individual courses the summer programs are also available.

I think what we were trying to address was the question of age and time, when if students fail the one, they are a year older going into the next.

Mr. Reycraft: Okay.

Mr. Clemens: I think there has been some reluctance on behalf of the schools to put students into that situation. We are saying, "Let's see if we can find some models and make it the easiest way we can to provide remediation, whether that is by a semestered system, by summer programs or by individual study." It comes right back to what we were saying, I think, in the beginning: Let's see if we cannot find the proper vehicles to ensure that those people are performing at their age or grade level.

I think you are right; there is no one thing we can do that says, if we do that, then everything will be fine.

Mr. Reycraft: Thank you.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like, first of all, to congratulate you for two items that you have brought to our attention this morning. I feel the emphasis on parental involvement in education, particularly in remediation, is one we certainly have not explored to its fullest.

I also like the educational resources concept that you have towards the end of your brief. I hope you will follow that up as much as possible with local boards, because I think it is really very important to co-ordinate all the resources of a community.

There are a couple of things I just wanted to run by you that I feel maybe are not fully understood. I tend to be along the same line of thinking in many ways as Mr. Reycraft regarding

the remediation that is possible and that is going on in the schools. I am sure you must be aware of the early identification project that has been taken on by the Ministry of Education over a long period of time. I guess the thrust of that identification, more than in the past, has looked at individual differences of students and certainly tried to find out their strengths and weaknesses as soon as possible and certainly was very tied into our new thrust into special education. That, I feel, has been a major attempt and certainly has been a major line of emphasis for many teachers and principals in this province.

I think some of the things that happen in the admissions testing that goes on at post-secondary institutions have to do with, first of all, a major adjustment period in the person's life; second, a new vocabulary, a new kind of textbook and a new kind of technology that are immediately presented to people who have come from, as we all know, those of us who went to that level of education, a much more sheltered environment. That is why I do not like dealing with statistics when I deal with educational results. I think they are sometimes taken without all of the parameters and without all of the context they need.

That being said, I hope you are aware of the provincial reviews, and particularly the one that seems to attend to one of your concerns, and that is reading. You may or may not know that there is a major provincial review going on in reading at the grade 6 level in this province this year, which will no doubt give us some insight into the kinds of strategies, and their success, that are being used with the course of study we now have in the elementary schools. I would hope you would watch that closely and continue to give input on those thrusts, which I think are exciting. I think they are nonthreatening, but I think they will be very meaningful.

The other thing I wanted to bring to your mind, since you talked about the certification of teachers' aides, is that I think if you did examine the qualifications of many of the teachers' aides in this province, you would find that many of them have had the certification at the community college level that is directly related to teachers' aides as well as the early childhood certification that goes out from those universities. Many, many of these people, in my humble opinion, are overqualified, but that is the field of work they have chosen. They tend to enjoy it a great deal. Some of them may not have that training, but I would suggest that they are in the minority. I have only my own experience upon which to base my statement.

Now I will go back to a little bit of a critique. I hope it will be a positive critique. Before I took this particular position, I was very involved with school boards, first as a teacher and then as a trustee. I used to find the way the media–and I will say the media because you have a very high profile in the media, you have credibility, you are very involved in the business community–but when your education committee comes out at the beginning of any given year with its recommendations or its critique of the system, I used to find it very difficult, as a person in either of those positions I have just mentioned, to come back with my own response to that critique. Even as chairman of the school board, which I was, I was invited only once by the chamber to come and respond. It is very difficult when there is not a continuum of contact.

I guess what I am asking you to do–and it may even be going on much more than I am aware of, because I have been out of that system now for almost two and a half years–is that you would try to have a stronger link with your local school boards. I do not expect you always to agree with them, or them with you, but I think it would be very helpful, for instance when the press release is given, that the school boards have the press release. It is much more helpful then to respond to that if you are given a sort of ground floor shot at the target.

I just ask for better communication. I think that is the way to go, and I am very aware of the efforts that the businesses you represent are making in education, particularly in the co-op area and in the career days. I think your support of the career days is outstanding, and I know that some of those relationships have continued in the form of mentoring, which I think is also a great need you can fulfil.

I am not being critical without some constructive support to my criticism. I really do feel it is important that the education and business communities work together to make the transition from school to work smoother.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful presentation.

Mr. Clemens: If I might comment, Mrs. O'Neill said a lot of things there that I can certainly subscribe to.

What occurs to me is that we come here to talk with you as representatives of the chamber. I am sure you are quite aware that both Cheryl and I are parents as well; so we are not only chamber members, and I think you expressed the same concerns we do, and if there is a way we can all

work together more productively, certainly we subscribe to that.

1050

I would just like to comment on an organization in the Hamilton-Wentworth area, the Industry-Education Council. I think they have done some excellent work over there. A council has now been started in Kingston and one in the Niagara area.

Mrs. O'Neill: They have presented to us, both of those groups.

Mr. Clemens: Have they? Yes, I think that is another hopeful sign that we are finding much more involvement at the local levels, not only with the chamber but with business, with education and so on. So I hope that can be expanded.

There is also a fledgling movement now, the adopt-a-school program. I say fledgling because it is quite widespread in the United States, where businesses actually work with schools to do what they can to help. I think these are all hopeful signs. We may appear to be critical, but I think we are critical in trying to be constructive.

Mrs. O'Neill: My remarks were in the same context. Thank you.

Mr. Keyes: Mr. Clemens and Ms. Craig, I think you have just touched on one of the questions I would ask, because I felt you had not had a chance yet to expand upon the chamber's view on the role of developing the essential partnership among school, home and business. You were touching on it just now, and maybe Ms. Craig wants to add to it.

But I wanted you to make a comment about the role of the chambers of commerce in promoting and supporting both the co-op ed and the adopt-a-school program, both of which are very active in my own community. I think probably you have touched on it, unless Ms. Craig would like to add to it. I would be happy to give her that opportunity because I think that is essential. What we are attempting to achieve in what you see as shortcomings in your brief can only be achieved if we do have that partnership between us and continue to build on it. I will leave that question, maybe, to Ms. Craig.

The other one was lightly touched on by both Mrs. O'Neill and Mr. Reycraft, but again, you did not have a chance to comment on the survey type of tests that are beginning, some last year but this year at the ends of grades 3, 6 and 8. So at the end of the primary division, the junior division and halfway through the intermediate, there will be 100 schools involved in being tested in the basics in a sense, the reading and the mathematics. To me, instead of returning to standardizing across the province, this provides an opportunity to do a province-wide sampling that can then be viewed by all schools in the province to look at and see, how we measure up against this province-wide sampling and provides us an opportunity to say that we had better get on the ball and work a bit harder; or say that we are doing very well, thank you, and continue in our practice. I wonder if you have a comment on that one.

Finally, so I get all the questions in and then you can speak, you did not take any position in the streaming area as to whether or not you felt there was merit in its being delayed, and many groups have. You mention that some have spoken on it. If you have a position on delaying streaming, I would like to hear that.

You made no comment in your brief whatsoever on the other aspect about the number of optional and compulsory subjects, the 30 in order to gain graduation. I think it is some fresh ground that has not been quite touched on.

Mr. Clemens: We are aware, I think, of some of the work that is going on in this area of testing. We did not mean to imply that nothing was going on at all. I guess we are just trying to encourage that to continue, and perhaps as quickly as we can get some standardized instruments at the various grades, so certainly that is something we applaud.

Streaming, to me, is a very open issue–I think for the chamber too. There are many views about that. In our brief, what we tried to say is that if we encourage every student to do as well as he possibly can, then perhaps the whole issue of streaming becomes less of a critical nature, because I think, as we are seeing now, most people are saying that when they get to high school, they are going to go into a stream.

I think the other thing we have to be very careful of is the fact that by leaving out streaming we do not leave the impression that every young person ought to be able to go on to university or go on to higher education, because I think the option of going on to the trades and apprenticeships, as we know, is a very viable option for certain young people. The way our system is structured today provides for that outlet. So I think we have to be very careful that we do not leave the impression that because we do away with streaming, we are just going to direct everyone to higher education. That is something I am very concerned about.

I am concerned that we see the three streams as being in some kind of rank order of importance. Indeed, they are not. I think there are many young people today who will not be able to go on to university, but that does not say they are going to be less valuable citizens. In fact, they may find their mission in life a lot more productive if they go on to an apprenticeship trade or something of that nature.

You had a third question that I did not note down.

Mr. Keyes: The other question was whether you had any comments on the 30 credits required for graduation at the moment and the number of optional and compulsory ones.

Mr. Clemens: I do not know if we could answer that as a committee, but what I think I would like to say is that there was some mistake, in my mind, when we went to the so-called 12 grades or whatever we want to call it, that that is, indeed, what had to be accomplished within 12 years. Nowhere did I ever see that that had to be accomplished. I think the body of knowledge that is required should be there, but it can be taken in 13 or 14 years. Nothing says 12 years.

Mr. Keyes: Or 12 1/2.

Mr. Clemens: Or 12 1/2, as we could always take 12 when they had 13. Maybe we have to really talk more about that so that the person does not feel he is failing if he fails to take it in 12 years. That is a heavy program to take in 12 years for some people.

Mr. Keyes: We are finding a good number who take it in 12 1/2 years, and that was also raised as a concern by several groups because of their completing it, say, in January. That was a concern to some parent groups.

Mr. Clemens: Yes.

Mr. Keyes: Does Ms. Craig have any other addition to just that view on these issues?

Ms. Craig: I did have some exposure to the co-operative education review process as a member of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce education committee. I was somewhat outnumbered by members of the education community. There were a number of representatives from the labour groups; that was excellent representation. I found working on that process an eye opener as a business person. I was very impressed with the calibre of the program that was being prepared by the ministry, and I was able, I believe, to make some contribution from a business perspective and how to apply it in the workplace. I found that was where, with my background, I was able to make this kind of contribution to put it into a little different perspective.

Also, I know we have an active co-operative program going in my home community, but I cannot comment on it, because I would have to research that in more detail before I did so. I think the co-operative program is excellent. I think it is a wonderful opportunity to educate young people realistically and also to continue to build the lines of communication between the business and education communities.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Keyes. I would like to thank the Ontario Chamber of Commerce for its presentation to us today. You have certainly made a valuable contribution as we look at the organization of the education system.

Just before we go on to our next presenters, I do have a couple of announcements for members. Dr. Gardner has advised that he has received the Statistics Canada data that we had requested earlier in the year. They are still in their raw form, so we will not be distributing them to individual members until we have finalized data. In the meantime, if any member wishes to see the raw data, which I gather are several feet high, please contact Dr. Gardner and he will make sure you have access to them.

Interjections.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No. The ministry is not providing this; it is okay. Mind you, I do not know what the ministry is providing. I just keep asking questions. One of these days I am likely to get something.

Mrs. O'Neill: You got a nice, big pack.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Did I? When, today?

Mrs. O'Neill: Oh, the beginning of last week, on the first two days of questions. I am sure we all got it. It was with a great big elastic around it.

Interjection: So it is just the other 20 days' worth of questions we have to get for you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, good.

1100

Mrs. O'Neill: I was amazed how many of your questions they answered, Richard, to tell you the truth.

Mr. Mahoney: Or understood.

Madam Chairman: The other item I would like to bring to members' attention is that we had two written exhibits handed out by the clerk this morning; they gave actual costing per pupil for the Sudbury Board of Education. Members had requested that when we were in Sudbury, and that is now available.

The other thing I would like to commend to your attention is the Essex County Board of Education semestering report, which was also handed out to members this morning. Please do read through that because it is extremely comprehensive, it compares the various systems in the board and I think we will find that very helpful when we are looking at semestering in our report-writing stage.

Mr. Jackson: On that point, I have already requested of research approximately two– Well, I am at page 16; I am not quite finished the report. It is phenomenal reading. There are several further items and references within there, and I hope those would be circulated with a cover note from Anne to indicate the fact that they are referred to well within the report. There are some excellent articles in here.

The other request I had, Anne, was with respect to the Ontario Public School Trustees' Association reference to a memo it circulated to all members on semestering. If we could get a copy of that from Marie Pierce, I would appreciate that.

Madam Chairman: If you would like to go over this with research at the end of the session this morning, we can make sure we get those additional data.

We will now go back to our delegations. The next presenters will be the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre. You have already come forward. Thank you. It is nice to see people are efficient and all ready to go. We applaud your initiative.

We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation time. I have noted that you have two fairly comprehensive papers, and if you could just–

Ms. Martin: The other one is to be presented a week tomorrow, next Tuesday. It is from the National Youth in Care Network.

Madam Chairman: Right now you will be going on the Youth in Care?

Ms. Martin: Team Teaching.

Madam Chairman: I am not sure members have that particular one. The two we have are Youth in Care in the Education System in Ontario and Team Teaching: The Child Welfare and Education Systems in Ontario.

Ms. Martin: That is ours. The Child Welfare and Education Systems in Ontario is the one we will present this morning.

Madam Chairman: This is the brief you will be dealing with. Okay. I refer members to The Child Welfare and Education Systems in Ontario. Now that we have that out of the way, you do have half an hour, and we hope that at least part of the time will be left for members' questions at the end. Please begin whenever you are ready and just start by identifying yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

PAPE ADOLESCENT RESOURCE CENTRE

Ms. Martin: My name is Fay Martin. I am a social worker and I am the supervisor of the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre, which we call PARC. My colleague is Irwin Elman. He is a teacher by training and he is the resource co-ordinator at PARC.

The Pape Adolescent Resource Centre is a preparation-for-independence program. Its function is to help youth in care, children raised by the child welfare systems in Ontario, in Toronto, to make a successful transition out of children's aid society care and into independent adult life in the community. There are more details in the beginning of the brief about how we work.

Our comments this morning will focus on that particular subset of students, and I think it may be valuable to learn as well about other students who are at risk in the education system.

Youth in care tend to come from families that share many of the characteristics of the families described by George Radwanski whose children have difficulty with the school system. These children continue to be at risk of failure in the school system when they enter care, for several reasons. They will likely be geographically mobile, as they move from placement to placement within the CAS system. They will be preoccupied with pressing personal and family issues, so that their ability to attend to schoolwork is jeopardized. Decisions about basic elements in their life–where they will live, who will parent them on a day-to-day basis, when and under what circumstances they will be allowed to see family members about whom they feel very strongly–are under prolonged consideration and are felt by the youth often to be determined by distant figures in the court system and by the CAS bureaucracy over whom the child feels very little influence.

There are low expectations for school achievement by the children themselves–they suffer from poor self-esteem and histories of failure; by the schools who may pity them, reject them or ignore them; and by the care agencies, whose preoccupation with legal and psychosocial issues often limits the attention available to the exclusion of school achievement.

The CAS system continues to struggle with services that will facilitate the successful education of their wards. The Get Smart tutoring program at the Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto and the writing program at the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre are but two examples of this sort of thing.

The consequences of school failure are more profound for youth in care than for children who live with their own families. In the short run, youth in care may lose CAS support if they leave school. In the long run, they must approach adulthood without the advantages of education as well as without the social and economic support that well-functioning families can provide.

Continuation of CAS support is closely tied to the child's behaviour after the age of 16, and once wardship is terminated, it cannot be reinstated; the youth is on his own for keeps.

Wardship ends automatically at age 18. Youth who are proceeding through the school system age-appropriately are not likely finished grade 12, and certainly not grade 13, by their 18th birthday. Furthermore, children in care are scholastically delayed. The recent Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies report indicated that children in care were on the average of one grade behind at age 12. This standardized termination of guaranteed support before the normal school-leaving age implies a systemic devaluation of school attendance and advanced school achievement.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides for continued financial support for youth in care who continue to attend school between 18 and 21 years of age. It is called extended care and maintenance. However, extended care and maintenance is not adequate for a youth to live on in urban Toronto where the excessive cost of housing has raised the poverty level to $923 a month. That is the Statistics Canada figure for, I believe, last year.

The amount of extended care and maintenance is determined in relation to the rate for a single person on welfare, a formula which in itself devalues and diminishes the youth in care, and it currently is $434 a month. Youth in care must therefore work part-time to bring their incomes to subsistence level. The Radwanski report suggests employment is a factor correlated with school dropout, and yet this necessity is built into the plan offered to youth in care.

The situation does not improve for youth in care who proceed to post-secondary education. The Ontario student assistance program, OSAP, is generally accessed as an alternative to extended care and maintenance and maximally provides a similar monthly living allowance in addition to tuition and minimal book budget.

It is evident that youth in care who do not succumb to the statistical predisposition to early school leaving must attempt in the later stages of education to succeed at school under conditions of substandard housing, poverty and financial worry. Failure means they will launch their adult lives without the advantage of education as well as without the advantage of familial social and economic support.

What are the consequences? Our experience is that many youth in children's aid societies are streamed into basic-level education where they often fail to achieve primary literacy. The population we work with tends not to be those youth who have left school at 16. Thus, it is likely that the plight of youth in care is worse generally than for those we serve.

Our clients report that either they were unaware of the decision to stream them into basic education, were unaware of the consequences of such a decision and/or felt unable to protest or influence the decision. Some welcomed the decision because it reduced pressure to perform academically, which they found difficult.

Streaming into basic schools did not, however, improve their school experience, even in the short run. Our clients report that they felt different, implying inferior, because of their family situations and that this feeling of difference was exacerbated by school failure, including being sent to a "dummy school."

Furthermore, they felt they were labelled within the school because of their CAS involvement. Some who posed management problems were labelled as troublemakers, and it was assumed, they felt, that they had come into care because they were bad, with no appreciation that their life experience might create bad behaviour. Alternately, others were absolved of all consequences for their behaviour because they were seen as coming from bad families. They were excused from learning because of their disrupted personal life. Others, particularly those who bore their problems privately and quietly, were ignored and were neither challenged nor nurtured by the school system.

Protective factors: Ironically, the survival skills that youth in care learned in coping with their dysfunctional natural families and with the experience of being in care were often applied to the school experience in such a way as to escape difficult circumstances, such as learning academic basics. Being successful at hanging in

with the school system, which we have indicated has special value and significance for youth in care, and learning academic skills, are two quite different things, a difference which our clients have explored in detail.

Youth in care do find ways to succeed at school. Some are strong enough to manipulate both the school system and the CAS system to meet their needs. One of our clients located a home of her choice with an aunt when she was no longer able to live with her family, and she evaded identifying herself as a CAS ward to the school system. The aunt highly valued school, as did our client. She completed high school and is now attending third year of university. She lives independently in the community and has to work part-time and worry about making ends meet on OSAP. She is the young lady from whom you will be hearing next Tuesday, presenting the other brief you probably already have in your hands today.

1110

Some youth go to great lengths to encourage school stability, even in the face of placement changes. One of our clients moved five times in her first year out of foster care while attending grade 12. In each case, she located lodgings within commuting distance of the school. That is another young lady you will hear from next week.

Another client commuted from lodgings in Scarborough to her old school in Weston for the remainder of the school year in which she moved out of her foster home. However, she was not permitted to register at that school the following year.

Some youth find an adult, either within or outside the school system, who cares about their education, advises them and/or advocates effectively for them. Sometimes this is a care giver, a foster parent, a social worker or whatever. Sometimes it is a guidance counsellor or a teacher in the school. Sometimes it is a found individual. This is a need that we at PARC often identify and sometimes meet. Sometimes advocacy results in arrangements being made that encourage optimal educational opportunities and school continuity for individual students, and sometimes it does not.

Some youth access alternate schools as a way to continue or re-enter the educational program. We have had some success with combining the Futures II program, which is half-time work, half-time study for slightly more than the minimum wage, with alternate school enrolment, supervised study in a nurturing environment and an individualized work opportunity.

Some students re-enter the school system through adult upgrading, supporting themselves on student welfare, augmented–inadequately because of the earning limit–by part-time employment. Again, one of the young people you will hear from next week has come by that route back into the school system.

Mr. Elman: Some recommendations: Much of the debate in response to the Radwanski report has centred on the issue of flexibility or rigidity in the school system. Our position is that there be a rigid expectation that every child who attends the school system should learn to read, write, communicate, problem-solve and do basic mathematics, but that there be flexibility in how the child is taught these skills; that is, skill outcome is rigidly enforced; teaching creativity is required to achieve the outcome, and the system, not the student, holds primary responsibility for the outcome.

We acknowledge it is impossible to teach someone who does not want to learn. We also recognize that failure to learn in the final analysis has resounding implications for the learner, which must be balanced by implications for the teacher during the educational process. We believe that evoking the motivation to learn can be done and that the responsibility to do so should rest systemically with teachers, not students.

1. We recommend flexibility in level of instruction at the level of classes, not at the level of schools.

The curriculum for each subject should be the same, regardless of level of instruction, but the level of knowledge and skills gained would vary depending on the performance level of the student. There should be easy mobility between the levels of instruction, both up and down, over the course of a school year, as well as between school years. This assumes that level of instruction is determined by the performance of the student, not his native ability, and that performance is amenable to remediation. This also assumes that the standards of knowledge and skill for each subject and level are clearly and objectively defined and can be invoked at any point in the curriculum.

2. We recommend flexibility in residential requirements to enhance school placement stability.

At present, the CAS system is limited in its ability to provide placement stability. While this is a problem that is receiving a great deal of attention, it is not likely it will soon be resolved.

Therefore, it is necessary that the school system compensate. School is the second-largest venue in the life of these children and has the possibility of being a haven in their chaos.

3. We support Radwanski's recommendation that each student have an individual mentor or monitor, as long as the youth is in control of the selection process.

The single strongest protective factor identified by our clientele is identification of a person within the school who they feel is interested in them and to whom they may go for assistance. An important factor in the formula seems to be that the school person takes a human interest in the youth and is not just doing his job. This element can only be retained in Radwanski's recommendation if the selection process is in the control of the youth. Furthermore, since the success of the exercise lies in a relationship of trust being established between the two individuals, the match cannot be effectively made except between the two individuals involved.

If the youth in care has within his CAS family these resources, the school mentor has a less difficult job, just as he will have with students from well-functioning families. Nevertheless, it is important that the service be universal to avoid the kind of stereotyping and labelling that our clients have identified as disadvantageous in their school experience.

It is obvious that in order for the mentoring role to be effective, school stability is essential.

4. We recommend that teachers be encouraged to be creative and flexible in helping the student achieve outcome requirements.

It is increasingly accepted in remedial and adult education that the best way to teach is the way that works for the student. We would like to see this flexibility incorporated in the standard structure, so that the student does not have to fail before creativity is applied. We support the basic recommendation of the Radwanski report that teachers be held more accountable for outcome, and we recommend that there be less restriction on how they teach.

The necessity for objective standards of achievement is basic to this, as previously discussed. A fortunate byproduct of this clarification of responsibilities is that both teacher and student have short-term feedback on progress, which should result in early and mutual focus on learning styles and short-cycling experiments to determine what works.

5. We recommend that schools be flexible in utilizing personal skills in achieving academic skills.

Children raised in dysfunctional or inadequate families and in care develop skills which may be very close to the kinds of practical skills that business is saying it wants the schools to engender. Schools should be more flexible in helping them to translate these skills into skills useful in the school and work world.

The present vocational courses have the potential for allowing such a transition, but because they have not been used as a means to teach basic academic skills but as an activity to be engaged in instead of learning academic skills, the students fail to appreciate the value of what they bring to the situation or what they get out of the situation. In short, it is as irrelevant to them as the more esoteric academic studies from which they were protected were feared to be.

In every student there is a contradiction between what he can do–ability–and what he does do–performance. The necessity for maximal success is always to keep the student working at the cutting edge where ability and performance meet.

6. We recommend that re-entry to the educational system be made as flexible as possible.

Adolescence is a time when some lessons can only be learned by stunning consequences. For youth in care, the consequence of leaving the school system early or failing to achieve literacy while in the school system may not be evident until they have left care and been independent for a while. It is essential that they be given every opportunity to try again, since their eventual ability to be economically productive citizens very likely depends on it.

We recommend that educational re-entry be eased by the provision of adequate financial support, related support services and individualized courses designed to address well-entrenched difficulties.

Our bottom line is that everyone who attends school should be taught to read, write, communicate, problem-solve and achieve numeric literacy. The means by which this end is reached may vary and the level of ultimate achievement may vary, but the basic expectation remains the same and responsibility for achieving the end rests with the school system.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. We have just over 10 minutes for questions and I know Mr. Johnston is very anxious to start off the questioning.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes, I really enjoyed reading your report earlier and I thought it gave us a very different kind of approach to the questions of education than, let's say, the group

that was just here before you, and that I thank you for a great deal. Can you tell us a little bit more about PARC? How long have you been in existence?

Ms. Martin: We are finishing our third year of service.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What kind of statistical follow-up do you have for the kids you have been dealing with? It is not long for a longitudinal study, clearly, but I wonder what you have been doing in terms of seeing what the outcomes are for the kids you have been involved with.

Ms. Martin: Educational outcomes?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes.

Ms. Martin: I do not have a statistical base on this. We serve about 200 young people a year. A primary focus is to get the young people back into school or into work. If they go to school, they must also work because of the limitations of their financial support. We are quite successful at that and we use a variety of transitional modes, so we can certainly talk about what we found useful.

Mrs. O'Neill: Excuse me. Did you say 200?

Ms. Martin: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How many of the 200 you were involved with in the first year do you still have an involvement with? I presume some of these are 15- and 16-year-old young people, and at 16, if they choose, they can move out of the child welfare system or, as you seem to indicate, it can be maintained.

1120

Ms. Martin: The mandate is 15-plus and the population tends to be in the older ages, so I think our average age was 19 or 19 1/2 last year. It is probably about the same now.

We miss the young people who are most at risk. We miss the young people who leave the school system and who leave children's aid society care at age 16. They do not engage with our program; they do not get that far. Of the ones we serve, I would say the first year we probably have 10 to 15 young people to whom we still provide service. For the second year it is maybe as high as 20 per cent or 25 per cent. I am giving you ballpark figures.

Our undertaking is to provide service to the young people as long as they require it and make use of it in order to complete the transition successfully. The numbers get confused by the fact that when they have finished needing service from us, we get service from them in that they become positive role models for the young people who are earlier in the process. It gets a little hard to be accurate about the numbers.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Given the fact that most of the difficulties these young people will be having with the education system have occurred much earlier, especially given the kinds of lifestyle they have had to lead in terms of mobility and that kind of thing, what changes would you see in terms of this kind of program being available to younger adolescents? Is that possible?

Ms. Martin: The secret to our success to a large extent is very personalized attention to the young person, finding the resources out there that will meet his particular need and then patching together whatever it is he needs that meets his need.

That requires two things. One is getting to know the young person very well, and because these are kids who have had their personal lives in the hands of many people who are ultimately more or less strangers to them, it does not happen overnight. You have to get to know them well enough that they will let you in; and you need to know the resources in the community, and then you need to become very good at bending and switching programs.

I was interested to hear the previous people say that Futures was a useful program from their point of view. We think it is useful if you use it well, okay? We have done wild and wonderful things with it that happen to meet the needs of one kid or another kid. It is highly subsidized, though, by our service. That kind of personalization is exactly what the young people need, and the mentoring thing Radwanski suggests, I think, could help with that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Mrs. O'Neill was raising around the previous presenters' brief the importance of parents, and these are kids to whom that kind of assistance is not available. I am just thinking about the 12-, 13- and 14-year-olds who are in the situation of moving from foster homes all over the place without any prospect of mentoring and, as far as I know, no programs in particular that are designed as yours are and, obviously, no option to use Futures or that kind of thing because of their age.

You are coming in so late–

Ms. Martin: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: –and your points about re-entry are well made and I accept those, but if we could get something like what you are doing happening earlier, clearly it would be a useful thing to do. What kind of form could that take

when there is not the economic side of it, there is not the possibility of the part-time work, part-time study option and those other kinds of resources?

Ms. Martin: The route we are going, really, is to try to challenge the children's aid societies themselves to pay more attention to education. They tend, by legislation, to have to spend a lot of attention on legal stuff; there is no argument about that. They tend, because they are social workers, to look at psychosocial stuff. There is no in-built attention to the educational requirement, yet I think if it goes well, it is a very good protective factor for the kids.

One of the recommendations made in the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies report was that when kids come into care, they receive an educational assessment. You cannot argue with the sense of that. On the other hand, when the kids come into care, they are really in fairly traumatized shape and you have to question the validity of whatever testing happens.

We certainly deal with a sequelae of kids who, six months after they have come into care in a really traumatic way, get IQ tested. They come out educable mentally retarded or borderline and they get streamed as a result of that testing. It is sort of like seeing how fast a person can run by giving him a test the day after he comes out of hospital with his leg in a cast, to use a kind of clumsy metaphor. I guess that is a problem to which we do not have the total answer. I think the direction the answer needs to go in is a really personalized knowledge of the kid, getting to know the kid well enough that you really have a sense about this kid's strengths and weaknesses and the social factors involved in knowing who the Prime Minister of Canada is or those other very Canadian cultural things that form the basis of IQ testing.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Let's hope that last question is just a passing thing that they need to know anyhow in more of a historical context.

Mr. Jackson: I would like especially to thank you for your brief, because you have focused on an area in which we have not received much input, and it is an area which I think is absolutely critical.

Your reference to SALEP is deeply appreciated, as well as the fact that you have underscored the previous position of children's aid society wards to that. Having spent 10 years on SALEP and English-as-a-second-language committees and working out innovative programs, I cannot tell you how important it is that more legislators get exposed to the serious gap in the system that we allow young people to fall into.

Unfortunately, you have equally been kind to the brevity of your presentation and that has not served you as well. I wonder if you might expand on the one point. Again, serving on an adolescent services board, I am familiar with some of the statistics. Perhaps you could illustrate your need for the student to be involved in the decision of from whom he receives his mentoring, guidance and support. It is quite important, and one element of it is the increased number of sexual assault and abuse cases. This is a significant factor in terms of the gender and appropriateness of that counselling and how important it is that it be brought into perspective. You did not highlight that, but I know that is an undercurrent that requires attention. Perhaps you would expand on that point.

Ms. Martin: Our concern in the Radwanski report was that it would become a mathematical thing: "Here are the teachers who want to do it and here are the students who want to do it," and check, check, check. It will not work. It is that simple.

The other thing I find interesting is that when well-functioning kids at school choose their mentors–and they have not just one, but many mentors; they get very good at stickhandling their problems through the school system–they choose who they think are good guys and who they think can serve the particular need they have. Our kids are young people who often do not have those skills.

I think two things need to happen. One is helping them learn the skills, and that probably falls within the aegis of the CAS and calls for upgrading of the kind of attention available to the problem.

The second piece–there are probably three–is giving them the time to get to know what the resources in the school are, under the expectation that they will choose somebody. So they get the message: "You can choose somebody. You've got a bit of time to do it, but you have to have somebody. Everybody has to have somebody." I think setting that up would be useful.

The third piece is probably the stability of school. Even when our kids do find somebody in the school system who is useful to them, that is it for this year or this half of this year. Then when they move on to the next school, they have to start from scratch again. There needs to be a stability factor in there. It is very complex, and I certainly do not have a final answer to it.

Mr. Elman: If we think back to our own schooling, most of us who have been successful in school can think about a teacher or somebody in the school system who knew us and meant something to us. The selection of that mentor, if you want to call the person that, happened naturally for us in the sense that we chose that person as well as his choosing us.

That is really what we are saying about this approach. Right now, students in school get guidance counsellors picked for them. They are told: "This is your guidance counsellor. Go and see him." I know it is very difficult for counsellors who have a lot of students on their case load to develop the kind of mentoring relationship that happens with successful students.

For some people, maybe it was their guidance counsellor, but for a lot of other people, if you think back, the teacher or the person in the school who meant something to you, who knew you, who really gave you the grounding to do well, was not somebody who was picked for you. Somebody did not say: "You go and see this person. Make the appointment and work your school out." I think we are respecting that process when we say that youth has to be involved. I think we did mention about youth in care, having to feel the need to be in some sort of control of the process too.

That is really important for youths who have never really had that control in important aspects of their lives. They are taken from their home. Their foster home breaks down and they are moved from there to somewhere else. They are moved from a school without much say. So it is important to have them have some sense of control.

1130

Mr. Jackson: One of the things that concerns me and one of the reasons I believe we will be addressing this in our final report, even if I have to resort to a minority report–I feel so strongly about it–is that there is a moral question here.

Once a student is on the SALEP program, the board still receives the funding from the government for that student, but the student is now kicked out of one means of support and left–you illustrate it very well in the report. Once you are out, you are out and that is it.

Do you believe we should be having more standards set in terms of a protocol for students at risk in this area–that is, the groups you are advocating for–in terms of stabilizing the school environment? We were unloading up to 100 students a year in this program until we caught wind of it and had to put a stop to it.

The solutions were some of the points you raised. By stabilizing a specific school, you could develop independent learning programs, which you referred to in your first sentence, but then you lost track of the independent learning. That is an essential ingredient, but within independent learning is a far different staff-student ratio which helps in the mentoring process. You have individualized learning, which is a function of that. Then you get interpersonal relationships.

We found schools that were writing off students. There were other schools that were predisposed to being supportive of these identified students. You can go into systems and find those schools. They can occur because of the demographics or because of the unique leadership of the teachers and the staff in it. I think we should have a protocol in this province for some of those proven successes because there is a formula out there with which that will work.

You were very polite about the relationship with the Ministry of Skills Development. I do not expect you to be inflammatory, but I am familiar with the problems with funding and support from the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Skills Development and the impact on student welfare, as it has been referred to, and access to learning programs.

Actually, you indicated that it requires a tremendous amount of subsidy from your agency. I thought you were being rather too polite about something I consider somewhat critical. Perhaps you might expand on that because the times that I am called upon to intervene is on that very point.

Young girls are being forced to go back to the home, where they are being abused because when you peel it all back, it has to do with the fact that there is no funding there and no one can get money to this individual because there are not sufficient adolescent beds in the community. There is not funding to have outreach programs.

There is a whole series of problems, but in the case of the basic core funding for a student who wishes to maintain that academic standing for the future, the whole system militates against it. You were being rather polite. I do not consider that a criticism. I am just giving you an opportunity and a door here to be a little more direct in front of all members of this committee who are concerned about this issue.

Ms. Martin: I have a particular drum to beat on that. Regarding the young people we work

with, the state is their parent. The state has said their own parents are not good enough and are not doing a good enough job, so it takes them away.

I think it is really not right that the same state that takes them away, then allows them, encourages them and requires them to live in poverty and, in fact, asks them to win a race in which they are already at a disadvantage, with one foot tied behind their back. I think that is immoral; it is that simple.

Obviously, I could get quite feathered about the whole thing. I do think it is a common problem for other children who have not been taken into care. But surely we, the society, and we, the state, have a particular responsibility for those children for whom we are the collective parents through the children's aid society. Poverty is not what one provides adolescent and young adult children with in order to help them succeed in life. In the long run, if we do not support them, they will not support us. The fallback position for kids who do not manage in school and do not manage socially is that they become state-dependent; so we will continue to support them for the rest of their lives. Ultimately, many of them–many more than are getting an even chance–have the opportunity to be economically productive members of society if we give them the help they need.

I think it is worth it. It is stupid not to do so. I guess I would even go to that position. Yet I see that the system's critical lack of communication among them and various other reasons do not give what is clearly necessary for them to have a chance to succeed, and we ought to do so.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you for the opportunity to ask those questions. I think Ms. Martin's final comment, the very last sentence in her brief, puts the point totally in perspective. The responsibility for achieving the end rests with the school system. In fact, they are the parents of these students.

Ms. Martin: May I say to the committee that next Tuesday the National Youth in Care Network, which is an organization composed of young people in the latter stages of leaving care or who have already left care, will be presenting to you; so you will have an opportunity to ask them questions directly as well, which I think may be very useful to you. They are consumers you do not often hear from perhaps.

Madam Chairman: Just before you leave, I know we are technically out of time, but Mrs. O'Neill has a final brief question.

Mrs. O'Neill: First of all, I want to commend you for the kind of work you are doing. I happen to have started my volunteer life in the area you are working in, and I think the clients I worked with taught me more about life than I taught them.

I am very happy with two parts of your brief. I think your emphasis on mentoring is outstanding. Mentoring came into the school system, as you likely know, to work with the gifted students. That was where the first idea came from. You have certainly brought that full circle, and that is excellent.

The other thing I would like to highlight just for the record is that you seem to have, on folio 15, an emphasis on special education at the continuing education level. You do not phrase it as such, but that is an area which only a few boards have taken the risk to jump into. I really hope that people like yourself will encourage boards to say, "Yes, re-entry special education is every bit as important as the regular-stream special education."

I have one question to you. In your introductory remarks, which you did not read this morning, you talk about contracts. May I ask just a very specific question? Are these individual contracts with a very specific time frame, or is that just a word you used, or do you actually sign contracts with these young people?

Ms. Martin: We do not sign them, but we go through a more or less formalized procedure, depending on how much formalization a young person can accommodate. But they are specific, pragmatic and time-framed, and we expect to see progress towards goals over time. The contracts are to see that everybody, including the young person and the care community, does his piece in achieving that. So we try to do the accountability of all to the goal of the child.

Mrs. O'Neill: You say the school system is sometimes involved in that.

Ms. Martin: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is good. Keep up that work. I think that is also another very commendable goal that you have.

Ms. Martin: Raising consciousness within the system, yes.

Madam Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for your simply excellent presentation and commend you for the work you are doing.

Our final presentation of this morning will be from the Ontario Council of Regents for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. Could you come forward, please.

While Dr. Pascal and his group are getting settled, I will mention to members to note our 9:30 start time tomorrow morning.

Mrs. O'Neill: I have already noted that.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

We will be having Lloyd Dennis at 9:30 and George Radwanski at 11 o'clock. We will try to start fairly promptly. If anybody will be having a substitute tomorrow, will he please pass on the message that we will be starting at 9:30. At the present time, we are scheduled for committee room 1. If there is a change to room 151–and we have made a request, but the room is booked; so we do not know at this stage whether that will be honoured–either we will be sure to notify members during the course of the day or contact your offices. So we have a 9:30 start tomorrow morning.

Mr. Keyes: I think the first two presenters tomorrow are so significant that even if we got a portion of the day in there, it would be advantageous to the viewing public.

Madam Chairman: We have certainly been doing our best. We are just awaiting word from the Speaker as to whether he would be willing to move his group out of room 151 for tomorrow morning. We will keep you alerted.

1140

Mr. Keyes: Have you got a lunch engagement today, by any chance? If you have not, you should have.

Madam Chairman: Speaking of changes, Dr. Pascal, I see you have had a change since the last time we saw you.

Dr. Pascal: I found my half-hour with the committee so provocative in terms of the questions arising, I have had little time to shave in contemplating some better answers to your excellent questions.

Madam Chairman: You are certainly looking very distinguished. I know I personally remember your presentation in July quite vividly, not only your very moving letter to your daughter but also your comments quoting Aristotle and your SERPitude, so quite a bit of your presentation stayed with me.

Interjection.

Dr. Pascal: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: He is referring to my very short attention span, I am sure.

Dr. Pascal, if you would like to start by introducing your panel for the purposes of electronic Hansard, then you can begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO COUNCIL OF REGENTS FOR COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Pascal: Yes, I brought some support. This time, on behalf of council, I have to my right the vice-chair of the council, Laura Barr, well known around Ontario in terms of her tremendous contributions over the years in the allied health field. Anyone who is preoccupied with education in any way, shape or form will know my colleague to my immediate left, Penny Moss, also a member of the Ontario Council of Regents and representing the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. To my far left is Dr. Riel Millera, newly appointed manager of policy and research for the Council of Regents.

What we would like to do in about 15 minutes is to talk a little bit about where the college system has been. You recall last time I was here we talked not about the college system per se, but we reinforced what I think you were appropriately doing at that time, and that was to talk about the philosophy and goals for education generally. Today we would like to begin with a few comments about our very fine system of colleges in Ontario, make a very brief comment about the role of council and how it is changing and the agenda ahead of us, and then have an opportunity to respond to questions as they arise.

Obviously, in beginning with where the colleges have been, the demand on the CAATs has reinforced the necessary reality to earn respect through doing. We have been asked to do so many things in so many different directions that, as a collective and as individual college representatives, over the years we have had little time to bask, to brag or even to beg when people have felt it appropriate.

You might ask one of the thousands of graduates or one of the current 110,000 full-time post-secondary students what the colleges have been up to; or you might ask one of about 700,000 registrants in part-time courses and skills and continuing education programs; or you might ask the high school graduate who is engaged in hands-on experience in one of the colleges many high-tech programs or an experienced worker taking robotics training for a more secure future. Talk with the owners of a family-run motel who need in-service training to remain competitive or talk with one of their children who will take over the business in a few years with the self-confidence typical of our tourism and transportation graduates from the college.

The Ontario colleges have been both efficient and flexible in serving very diverse clients: chronically unemployed youth lacking successful work experience; single mothers who wish to become tool-and-die makers or computer-aided design technicians; young men who wish to pursue careers in nursing; native bands in northern Ontario desirous of a more culturally sensitive education and training; many, many thousands of new Canadians enrolled in second language learning classes; manufacturers who need applications research to implement integrated systems to remain competitive in the global market; Canadians serving in the armed forces enrolled in tailor-made post-secondary programs, or prison inmates who require a broader education and new skills that go beyond the typical resources available.

When the Ministry of Labour wants its occupational health and safety inspectors trained, it turns to one of our colleges. When the Ministry of Natural Resources wants fish to be mercury-tested, it turns to our natural resource experts. When Science North in Sudbury was established, it was our technology experts from the local college who provided leadership to the display development process.

The students in our system are now working in a tremendous variety and breadth of fields in the health sciences, applied arts, business and technologies. The range has been extraordinary and deserving of far more public attention in view of the sheer numbers involved, if nothing else.

Currently, the number of tax dollars invested annually in the colleges of applied arts and technology is over $1 billion, with over 8,000 full-time teachers. Our hands-on education and training is kept up to date by over 4,000 experts from the private sector and public agencies, who sit on over 700 advisory committees required for all programs.

Very briefly—and there is more contained in a speech that will be distributed shortly—the colleges have been doing many things in many different directions. Many of us who have worked in the system feel that we have been asked to focus on so many different things that on occasion a few of us feel that the system may be out of focus. It is in that context that the Ontario Council of Regents a few years ago was asked to adopt a new role, that role being defined as a medium- and long-range planning and policy advisory, reporting directly to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

In point of fact, right now we are in the process of moving from a big brother-big sister role at the bargaining table, which has occupied a lot of our attention in the past, to this collaborative integrated policy and planning advisory to the minister. As we look ahead, and as we approach the year 2000, we will be revisiting that mandate set in motion in the mid-1960s, asking such questions as:

Are we doing enough for part-time learners? What is the appropriate nature and extent of transferability of students among and between colleges and universities? Should we encourage some joint college-university program development? Should there be more polytechnic education? What is "polytechnic" in year 2000 terms? Given the global challenge of a more competitive Canada, is there a role for colleges in applied research and more technology transfer and partnership research with the private sector? Has the open-door nonélitist system in the colleges become a revolving door for too many? How can we achieve maximum accessibility and success for students, and what conditions and policies are required?

Should we be doing something for the 16-year-old leaving high school early? How can we provide both specialized education and training and general and lifelong educational knowledge and skills with limited resources? At the heart of so many issues is quality; how do we take this complex issue and define it and assure it so that our approach meets the expectations of students, employers and the taxpayers?

Some time within about 10 days our minister will be announcing quite publicly a process for reviewing and renewing the college system mandate in terms of today's pressures and, more important, what we see as Ontarians in terms of the economy and social opportunities of tomorrow. She will be providing, obviously, a good deal of detail with respect to the shape of that process.

In concluding my opening remarks, this morning I was reading a piece from a country immediately to the south. The piece is entitled A Perspective for the '90s: A World in Search of Meaning In spite of its southern context, I thought I would summarize a few of the things that I noted therein this morning during breakfast.

"In an age when our main problems are not so much economic or technical but human and social, what constitutes the foundation of education?

"In a technology-driven age, how does education strengthen the enduring human values that give meaning and fulfilment to the individual?

"In an age of disintegration, how will education teach our children the arts of integration?

"In a global age, how does education foster an appreciation of other peoples and cultures?

"In an age where students have access to all knowledge by the mere press of a button, how does education develop the judgement and wisdom needed to use that knowledge to take best advantages of the possibilities at hand?

"In an age of sectionalism and fragmentation, how do we teach our young people to see life whole, to perceive all the links?

"In an age of mobility and global impressions, how does education foster a sense of rootedness in time and place?

"In an age of ever-expanding freedom, how does education inculcate a respect for those inner personal restraints which prevent freedom from tumbling into a "get mine" free-for-all?

"In an age of gyrating attitudes and values, how does education develop in our children that inner certainty about the meaning of human existence which, alone, integrates the personality?"

These types of questions, obviously in a more generic way, bind your preoccupation with the education sector and the need for calling attention to providing even better education than this fine province already does. We have a common interest in ensuring that the continuum of education, which includes the colleges and universities along with your concern for elementary and secondary, is one that looks at these types of issues in a holistic and integrated fashion.

We are delighted to be here once again. We would be pleased to discuss the system and issues arising as you see fit.

Madam Chairman: We will start the questioning with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: For the past number of weeks we have obviously been deluged with information which many of us are having trouble assimilating, speaking personally. But it does seem to me that one of the things that has not happened as yet is any notion of expectation of what the education system should be looking like in 10 to 15 years' time. We have moved from the 1960s, when a fairly small percentage of people went to post-secondary institutions, and we had your whole area develop and the universities expand and now we have 30-some per cent of our population going on to some kind of post-secondary experience.

I am interested in hearing your views on where we are going or where we should be looking at going in the next 15 years or so in terms of the post-secondary break and what role you see for your sector at this stage.

Dr. Pascal: Before I ask my colleagues to respond, as I said to you and your colleagues during my brief summer visit, the process we use to identify the vision is as important as the product defined by that vision. When our minister describes in detail the process for having the college system's mandate reviewed against the backdrop of some future trends, we will engage stakeholder leaders in and around the college system and without and, in addition, we will be involving people who represent both the school system as well as universities and, obviously, representatives from the economy at large through labour, business and industry.

So I think the process that our review will take to heart will involve people and, hopefully, will ensure some integration in terms of the recommendations that come to our minister as a result of the process. Perhaps my colleagues would like to comment on the more specific question about what we see as the future.

Ms. Moss: I am not sure that any of us does, which is why we have the particular problem that I think faces us now. It is not as clear, I think, to those in education directly or to those outside, where we should be going. It is my view that we need to look at the systems differently than we have in the past. We have got very comfortable talking about schools, elementary and secondary, colleges, universities in a hierarchical sense, both in terms of the age levels at which traditionally they have educated people but also in a structural sense.

It is my view that we need to find ways to start to look at education in terms of the relationships inherent, not simply inside the building. The whole framework has to begin to deal with the questions about purpose. I think to begin to fulfil some of the purposes that I have heard, having watched some television of what is happening here, we are going to have to look at the relationships in schools, in colleges and in universities.

We are going to take not necessarily different structural shapes, but I think we are going to have to understand that when we talk about accessibility, for example, who gets in and how, we need to be more flexible. We need to get rid of this notion that if you have not done it by 16 or 18 or

whatever, you cannot do it. Some of the phrases that I think we need to take seriously are unfortunately becoming so often used that we sometimes dismiss their substance, such as life-long learning and retraining, and it does not just involve the educational sectors, it involves the relationship of employers to those sectors.

I would like to emphasize that we may have to find a different way of looking at education and its purposes in order to come to grips with what in the future it may need to look like.

Ms. Barr: The college system is 20 years old and I guess we are starting off on a positive note in looking at how we need to fit into the education system in this province; 20 years ago there was a defined population that this province needed to look after, and that was a huge group of grade 12 graduates with no potential for being prepared for a vocation in this province. I think that has been addressed to a high degree, so that is one area in success that we can look back on.

The other was to look at the needs of the adult learner. I think the colleges have done quite a bit in looking at that. We have developed the system, looked after the group of people that were described then to maybe a modest degree, but at least we have taken some steps in that direction. As Penny says, we now need to look at the integration of the system as a whole. We will not serve our people well if we do not do that. We need to be less preoccupied with what we started out to be.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We commissioned the Statistics Canada people to produce some socio-demographic kinds of figures for us, which depressingly have come in as a two-foot-high computer printout; I was just given an example of it this morning, to see if I had any ideas about how we could pull information out of it. I guess it is going to produce PhDs for people at OISE for a number of years. I am not sure what it is going to do for us in the end.

Dr. Pascal: I am pleased to hear that, as some of the teachers part-time at OISE–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is a teacher here for you, I can see this. There is a teacher where you are, of course.

The percentage of people who are age 15 and over in this province who have education either not up to grade 9 or are without a certificate at the secondary level is three million out of seven million. More interestingly, because that is a large age group–I took the age group from 25 to 45–out of 2.8 million people in that category, 808,000 of them do not have high school certificates or are not categorized by grade 9 or high school certificates; that is almost 30 per cent.

I guess my question comes out of this: if we have that number out there in that age group, we talk about continuing education and we know what the statistics are, but those people do not participate in continuing education and yet our society is getting much more complicated, then those people are still going to be young enough to want to participate in the work force for another 15 to 20 years, in some cases more. With your level of education, what can you do to attract these people and also to assist them with the new needs they are going to be facing?

Dr. Pascal: I mentioned in my shopping list of issues the word "quality," and the reason we need to look at quality is because everybody uses the word but there is precious little attention paid to what it is and how we ensure it when we can come to grips with defining it in some common fashion. When we talk about quality, we should be looking at who is coming and what they are coming with, and if they are not coming, what the problem is.

I think Mr. Johnston's reference to Statistics Canada is a good example of accessibility, not in terms of people coming in the door, but of people coming in the door and successfully competing, having all of the support systems there to ensure success. Accessibility should not just be defined in terms of who is coming to college and university and, obviously, who is attending the schools beyond the legal age.

We also have to look at process characteristics in education. While they are with us, what are we doing with them and how are we doing? You get involved in things like class sizes and issues that Mr. Radwanski has discussed or that you will be discussing with him next week, I understand. Then we have to look at outcome characteristics of the education system, as a result of who has participated and the manner in which they participated, and how they are doing in terms of some central objectives that we hold dear as a community of citizens.

Having said all that in responding to the specific question, I think there is a tremendous number of things that the two systems can do at the post-secondary and elementary-secondary levels. I will just use one example. I think my colleagues and I, in the college system, have to look at not only our own issues of attrition, but we have to take to heart the tremendous loss of confidence and the blow to our collective human resources and, in a sense, our contribution to guilt with respect to the dropout rates in high

schools. That is everybody's problem. People in the colleges do not take heart from the fact that the secondary school attrition rates may be higher than the colleges'.

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What I would like to see is a more articulated understanding between a particular college and the secondary schools in terms of almost an implicit or explicit contract between what a young person in high school needs to do to be able to have a specific allocated slot in a college program. We need to do a better job pursuing those articulated agreements so that if someone is feeling some anomy in a high school and is uncertain of his future, we can tie down in specific terms, "If you take the following types of courses, it can lead to a guaranteed slot in a college and that program in that college will lead to the following types of career opportunities."

I think in the past perhaps we have been modestly guilty of not doing well enough with parents and young people, not just in high schools but perhaps even in elementary schools, building a bridge between the labour market and what it is they can do by seizing more effectively opportunities at elementary school and high school. I would see far better communications between our level of education in very explicit terms and our young people in elementary and secondary schools.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is evidence now that your system is not even dealing with the general level as we expected it to, but is in fact taking a fair number of OACs at this stage. I guess what I am saying is that the mandate seems to have changed dramatically in terms of who a fair portion of your population is, yet there is this whole other population, 30 per cent of our adult population in this age group I am talking about, who have no access or very little access except for a few retraining programs into the college system at this point. Does that not mean a major structural change in how we think about that?

Ms. Moss: It may need a structural change, but what we do know very well is that the people who take advantage of particularly continuing education tend to be those who already know how to use systems. We need to look at ways in which to make it okay, legitimate, that people not connected at all with an education system at the current time feel that college is still a place where they can go.

I think we have a situation where many people do not even know where their local college is let alone the range of offerings. They have got used to the fact that they were not successful as youngsters. They may be now quite successful in later life.

It is also an area where I think we have to get better connections and a shared responsibility with the business and industrial sectors so that they participate in encouraging their employees to go to the college or to whatever institution not just for retraining purposes but because there are so many things many people would like to learn that are enriching, not simply because the employment requires the training to happen.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You are talking about a PEL—paid education leave.

Ms. Moss: That kind of thing, although it is the same old story. The people with the best access currently to leave programs for education in training tend to be the people who are already highly educated. Look at the universities themselves, with sabbatical programs. We need to make that kind of opportunity much more widely available right down the hierarchy.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The eyes of the chairman are burning into me and I will now pass on to some other member.

Madam Chairman: I just assumed you would be quite used to that by now, Mr. Johnston.

Ms. Barr: One more comment. I was at George Brown College here in Toronto not too long ago. I guess one of the things we need to be aware of is that there are many options for people. One of the problems that particularly large city colleges are facing is the amount of duplication and whether the best resources are being used in the best way. I think there is more going on than the colleges may be doing, but it is not well orchestrated in terms of other community resources.

Ms. Moss: That particular example Laura mentioned reminded me. George Brown has some very interesting programs where it is going out and forming links and providing programs at the initiative of a great variety of groups.

Ms. Barr: Yes, in the setting of the individual rather than coming to the school.

Madam Chairman: We have three members left who have indicated they have questions: Mr. Reycraft, Mr. McLean and Mrs. O'Neill. Perhaps we could keep the questions a little to the brief side.

Mr. Reycraft: I will try, Madam Chairman.

I want to ask about one of the four areas that the committee is looking at during this schedule of hearings, and that is the destreaming recommendation that has been made by George Radwanski and is now being advocated by a

number of people, including some on this committee. I want to ask particularly about those students who go directly from secondary school into community college. I wonder if you could give us some idea of how you feel that destreaming the secondary schools, teaching subjects only at one level of difficulty instead of three, as is now done, would affect the body of students that makes that direct transition.

Ms. Moss: If I might begin on this one, I think we need to understand the same thing about destreaming. I am not sure that there is an understanding. Destreaming, if you are simply talking about creating a single level of difficulty in secondary schools, will not result, in my view, in substantial change in outcomes, notwithstanding that it is a more socially just arrangement.

Destreaming needs to go along with very supported initiatives to create schools in which children and young people can be successful–more to be successful than at any time in our history if destreaming is to be useful. I cannot go into that now. If I am correct that we could take an approach in elementary and secondary schools that gets closer to guaranteeing equal outcomes as distinct from equal opportunities, then what I think we will find is that as youngsters start to make their choices for post-secondary educational work–the colleges and the universities, and whoever else is at work for that matter–the choices are going to be that much more informed choices, whereas right now we know that for many students university is the first option and community college may be the second option.

I think in a successfully destreamed system we would find much more the likelihood that teachers and students could work together to sort out what their interests are, as distinct from what their achievements are, so that their interests would be brought to bear on their community college or university choices. Right now, they often choose on the basis of achievement to date and not on the question of where their interests will be best served.

I do not think it would be negative for the colleges at all. I think that a greater number of successful youngsters from high schools could be very beneficial to the post-secondary programs in the colleges whereby we will get youngsters coming because this program is exactly what they want to do in terms of job or employment preparation.

Dr. Pascal: But regardless of whether the system is streamed or destreamed so to speak, colleges and the schools have to work far more closely together to ensure that there is common knowledge of the terminal objectives of the secondary school program and the entry objectives and the prerequisites required for appropriate college programs.

There has been dialogue in the past. It has to be improved upon. We have to take it on our shoulders to ensure that we are very knowledgeable about students as they arrive and that we are prepared to adapt to individual differences when they show up. Without streams there will always be individual differences with respect to the time it takes two different students to proceed from A to Z in terms of an A in a curriculum.

I am not as impressed as I would like to be with respect to how the two systems have worked together to develop a clear understanding of where one system begins in a particular area and where one ends and picks up. You would have to do a better job of that with either the streaming or the destreaming.

Ms. Moss: There has to be better knowledge in both directions, not just about the students but about the opportunities. I had an experience just last year, talking to grade 8 students in this city about careers. Their interest was in marine biology. I did my spiel and answered their questions about marine biology. Then I said to them: "Have you ever thought about freshwater biology? We are in the middle of Ontario, which has an enormous amount of fresh water." They said, "But you cannot study that in school or get jobs." They were absolutely amazed–but these are youngsters, right?–to know that Sir Sandford Fleming College has an aquaculture program.

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Dr. Pascal: Thank you. I was hoping you would mention the aquaculture program.

Ms. Moss: These things are novelties to many youngsters in school. They do not know what is there unless they have developed their interest all by themselves and go and search it out. We in the college system have to do a much better job of helping secondary teachers and students to understand what options there are.

Mr. Reycraft: If I could go back, Madam Chairman, to my question again–

Mr. Mahoney: She said no.

Mr. Reycraft: Did she say no?

Dr. Pascal: I sense that the dialogue which takes place on the Radwanski report is beginning to crop up on this side or that side on any issue, and I hope what our answer is trying to convey collectively–Ms. Moss and I did not caucus on this point–is to look at the generic objectives we are trying to achieve here.

It may be that some things need changing regardless of how one sits on the streaming or destreaming issue. The council does not have an informed, collective opinion, a yes or no, on that. What we are trying to do, whatever happens, is ensure a better transition from the schools to the colleges.

Mr. McLean: My question will be very short and simple. Are you making any recommendations to the minister with regard to college degrees being honoured by universities?

Dr. Pascal: One of the issues that will arise in the process the minister will be speaking to next week will be the issue of transferability among and between colleges and universities. I might say in answer to Mr. McLean's important question that over the last five years, five per cent of the college applications are coming from universities. It raises questions about Mr. Johnston's concern about the other clients we are supposed to serve but are not serving as a result; for example, the general-level students coming out of high schools.

We are finding that two per cent of our graduates are going on to university. Right now, there are more university students coming to colleges than the reverse. But the minister, I believe, will be asking us to pay particular attention to the transferability question. Right now, some students leave college and negotiate certain credits towards a university degree and vice versa, and it is important for us to look at what the options are and to articulate a clear sense of what should be in terms of the economy and other important social issues.

Mr. McLean: Just briefly then, as chairman, do you yourself believe the college certificate should be honoured in the university?

Dr. Pascal: Should it be honoured in the university?

Mr. McLean: As one of the criteria, for maybe one or two years less in a certain program.

Dr. Pascal: It already is. Good, tough clients, good consumers, the three or four per cent who tell themselves, "I have done this at X college and I believe it's equivalent to what I could do at Y university," are already negotiating credit for experience.

What we want to do is look at that issue in detail and come up with either policy recommendations or procedural recommendations to the minister that make it more probable that all students could take advantage of certain articulated agreements, informally or perhaps even formally.

There are some universities which are well known for giving credit for experience either from a college or from life itself. Lakehead comes to mind, and I think York University has developed a fairly progressive approach to what people have done elsewhere. I am not on the payroll of either of those universities, I would add.

Mrs. O'Neill: Dr. Pascal, I have just quickly glanced through the speech you gave and find it very interesting. I would like to ask you to think about now, after 20 years, not talking about the colleges as an experiment in education but as an experience in education.

Dr. Pascal: Thank you very much. I accept that important edit.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. I would like to say two things that I really find extremely admirable and I think unique in the educational community that the community colleges contribute. I think you have examined them well and fully on page 2; that is, your responsiveness to individual communities and the flexibility you have been able to carry with that. Flexibility may be ahead of its time in education, and you commented later on that.

I think that you also have used advisory committees likely more and better than any other educational level, and that is not easy. It is not easy to go out and get those people. It is not easy to bring good people to the table to talk to you about what is going on.

That being said, I have a couple of things you have listed in the issues on folio that are going to have to be dialogued on. The first one, I presume, is quite easy for you to comment on. In point 7 you ask, "Should the policy concerning student residences be re-evaluated?" Does that take into consideration our most recent announcements?

Dr. Pascal: No, it does not, because that was tabled at a conference in February and the minister's recent announcement suggested that should be taken off the shopping list. I think the government response is a timely one.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay, on point 8: I have a relatively close relationship with at least my local community college and we know that many of the people who are teaching in those community colleges do not have a faculty of education background. I would like you to comment a little bit more on point 8 here, and that is the development of presidents within your own ranks and the actual professional development that

needs to take place regarding teachers in community colleges.

Dr. Pascal: Thank you very much for what I think is probably the most important question. Obviously, I agree with my minister, who talks about three characteristics of the system–and I think this holds for education generally, being mindful of the fact that our minister used to make a very valuable contribution in the elementary and secondary field in Thunder Bay–and those are accessibility, relevance and excellence. Those three characteristics are not up for grabs as we look at the future of our college system.

However it is we get from here to there, to that vision we all wish to craft together, it will be through our people that we do it. We, as a system, have done some fantastic things for our people, but I do not think it is enough if you look at it from the point of view of what is required in today's fast-moving environment. So about six months ago, we, meaning the system, set in motion a process called Human Resources in the Third Decade, which is going to develop a comprehensive look at the manner in which we develop ourselves as academic leaders, teachers in the classroom.

Right now there is extant in the system a very rich variety of mechanisms to provide retraining. On the one hand, we purport to be the most flexible retraining organization in the history of the western world; yet can we, by the way we treat ourselves, be a model, an exemplar to the private sector, which we expect to invest some of its own resources, more and more, in the development of its people, using, obviously, our people?

We do have work experience programs where teachers go back into their fields every several years. I used to work in one of the 22 colleges, and we have a policy whereby teachers are expected to go back into the workplace that defines their particular field of expertise at least once every three years for two months. That supplements the sabbatical programs and so on and so forth.

We now have an orientation program that lasts for two years for all teachers coming into the system. We need to do a far better job in management training and leadership training than we have done in the past, so your question is terribly important and is central to a province-wide investigation right now.

In spite of the fact that I teach at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, when I was a president of a college, I also taught one course per year, because I enjoy teaching and because it allowed me to have more fertile conversations with my faculty colleagues in the lounge about their plight and mine. I am pleased to say that my evaluations seem to suggest that I am perhaps a better-than-okay teacher, but I have not been in a college of education to receive a teacher's certificate.

I think there are many different ways we can provide that robotics teacher with a comfort level about communicating robotics than just a degree from the faculty of education. There is a multiplicity of ways we can do that.

Madam Chairman: I thank you and your colleagues for coming here and giving us further insight into the council's position on education.

Dr. Pascal: We will be sending you the details on behalf of our minister about this process to be defined next week so that perhaps the select committee can tap in in some way. We will need your leadership. We look forward to the advice, comments and recommendations you have for education. We will be taking to heart your recommendations to your colleagues in the Legislature as we develop a vision for the college system.

Finally, I would say that I did not find any of the questions asked by your colleagues long but perhaps our answers were a bit long.

Madam Chairman: We never mind if the presenters' answers are a little long because that allows us to learn. But sometimes the preambles of the members are a bit longer than might be desired.

Mrs. O'Neill: And the chairman's.

Madam Chairman: And the chairman's, definitely.

Just before we adjourn until this afternoon's hearings, during the presentation by the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre, it was pointed out that we had two briefs from that group. Would members please remove the one called Youth in Care and the Education System in Ontario and place it in your packets for October 11, because we will need it at that time.

Hopefully, by this afternoon the heating problem will be solved. We froze last week and we are roasting this week. We have already made a request.

The committee stands adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 12:21 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:06 p.m. in committee room 1.

The Vice-Chairman: We will call the afternoon session of the select committee on education to order. I understand the chairman will be a little bit late but should be with us in 15 or 20 minutes.

This afternoon we again have with us the Ecumenical Study Commission on Public Education. Gentlemen, it is good to see you all again. Welcome back to the committee. We would be delighted to have you proceed with your presentation. We have a half-hour set aside for your it. We would like to reserve some of that time for questions, if possible.

Dr. Girhiny: We have been advised of your wishes and the committee's wishes by your able and competent staff.

The Vice-Chairman: Because of electronic Hansard, will you introduce yourself and your colleagues before you start.

ECUMENICAL STUDY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

Dr. Girhiny: My name is John Girhiny. I am executive director of the Ecumenical Study Commission on Public Education. To my left is Doug Palmer, who is the past chairman of the ecumenical study commission. To my right is Rae McKay, a new member to ESC, about six months old at about this point in time, and who is very much involved in the writing of this document, as he was in the first document that was presented to you.

Our chairman, it would appear, has been caught on the Ontario highway system and is not here, and so I will be making the presentation for both of us, unless he shows up by the time we get to his page.

We intend to make it a very brief presentation. Since the committee asked for this material well in advance, I assumed that one of its tasks was to try to think up some thoughtful and provoking questions, more provoking than last time. We hope we will be as capable of trying to respond to the questions.

Mr. Keyes: You want us to be provocative this time.

Dr. Girhiny: I was not looking at anyone when I said that. The ecumenical study commission recognizes that it is the select committee's intention in this round of its deliberations to focus on organizational rather than program issues. However, we note that OSIS is to receive attention. Our proposals would affect sections 3.4, which deals with the instructional program in grades 7 and 8; 4.10, the diploma requirements; and possibly 6.10, the exemption from nonguideline course approval in that document. Consequently, we have considered it appropriate to place these proposals before the committee at this time.

This presentation should be considered within the context of the brief concerning educational goals which we placed before the committee in July. We argued briefly in that document that one of the goals of education in Ontario should be helping each student to develop an understanding of and a respect for the religious traditions that are part of contemporary society. We will not here repeat the arguments set out in that earlier brief, but we would remind the committee that there are compelling reasons for introducing a multifaith religious education program in the public schools of the province at this time.

This document was written before last week's court decision.

The Ecumenical Study Commission on Public Education believes that multifaith religious education should be an integral component of the elementary school curriculum, that multifaith religious education courses should be offered for credit at each grade level of the secondary school and that one multifaith religious education course should be required for the Ontario secondary school diploma.

We consider it imperative that a wide spectrum of the religious faiths active in Ontario be involved from the outset in the development of policy and curriculum for such an initiative. Consequently, in advancing this proposal, we have purposely avoided any attempt to lay out a specific plan for implementing such a program in the schools. Our specific recommendations are as follows:

That multifaith religious education be recognized as an integral component of the elementary school curriculum;

That multifaith religious education be offered for credit at each grade level of the secondary school;

That one multifaith religious education credit be required for completion of the Ontario secondary school diploma;

That a multifaith task force be established by the Ministry of Education to assist in the development of policy and programs in religious education in the public elementary and secondary schools of the province;

That representation on the task force, referred to above, include a wide spectrum of religious faiths active in Ontario–teacher, trustee and parent organizations and those charged with preparing teachers, either academically or professionally;

That one or more staff persons with the appropriate expertise be assigned by the Ministry of Education to work with the task force in the development of policy and programs in multifaith religious education. By "staff person," we do not necessarily mean a person already in the employ of the Ministry of Education. We are thinking of it in the sense of administration staff for the task force itself;

That as a part of the development process, pilot projects be launched with boards interested in being so involved, especially at the elementary level, with appropriate evaluation procedures; and, finally,

That provision be made for the academic and professional training and certification of teachers of religious education. This would include both pre-service and in-service education and would involve faculties of education, schools boards and university departments or schools.

Involved in this issue, we would point out, is a question of equitable treatment as between Roman Catholic students and non-Roman Catholic students. It is possible in a secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic school board to earn one credit in religious education in each of grades 9 and 10. It would seem to be a logical corollary of the completion of the Roman Catholic system to the end of secondary school that, when OSIS is next formally reviewed, this provision would be extended to each of grades 11 and 12. Now that Ontario has two parallel school systems, complete from kindergarten to the end of secondary school, fairness dictates that students in the public system have no less opportunity to study religious education than their counterparts in the Roman Catholic system.

Since the select committee is dealing with organizational matters, we point out that we do not envisage the implementation of our request as either lengthening the school day or decreasing the time devoted to other subjects. The time dictated in the regulations may be used precisely as stated in a time-slot environment. There are many models and approaches to education which are used in different environments and at different age levels. In these cases, the two half-hours would indicate the relative importance of religious education and the percentage of the school week to be devoted to this subject.

In conclusion, the ecumenical study commission believes that a viable religious education program, multifaith in nature, can and should be introduced in the public elementary and secondary schools of Ontario.

The ecumenical study commission further believes that the development of policy and curriculum for such a program should be the responsibility of a task force, appointed by the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward), or by the Premier (Mr. Peterson), if you like. Representation on the task force should include a wide spectrum of religious faiths active in Ontario–teacher, trustee and parent organizations and those charged with preparing teachers, either academically or professionally.

I would like to thank the committee for its kind attention. We will be only too happy to respond to questions as best we can at this time.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you, Dr. Girhiny. We have about 20 minutes for questions. I will start with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: –as somebody who was delighted to see the court ruling the other day, perhaps starting off with that tone would help. As you know, I have distinguished between the observation of religious practice in the school system and the notion of a multifaith curriculum, which I concur with, but I have a little difficulty with the notion that this might be a required credit.

I would be quite concerned about that for a child of mine, for instance. I would prefer them to have the choice, as you suggest, and I would prefer them to have the choice, as you also suggest, throughout the secondary level, that it not just be something that would be available for a given year. That it would remain a choice and not be seen as an obligation would be something I would feel very strongly about. I would like to hear from you about this notion that this should be a requirement rather than an option.

Dr. Girhiny: I think the requirement dimension comes as a logical extension of our belief that it is worth while. On balance, the chances of it becoming one further requirement within the secondary school diploma system are very, very slim. We recognize that. But as I say, it is a logical extension of our argument that if this is being done properly and if it has the merit we see it having, then it would be something you would

want every person who is educated in Ontario to possess.

If you follow that logic, the only way it happens, generally speaking, in the school system is to make it compulsory, because our education system is such that we make anything that is important compulsory, and anything that is optional is viewed as being incidental or a frill. It is that sort of compactification of all those arguments that forces it to become mandatory.

Mr. Palmer: May I add to that, as well. Some of us worked very hard in 1970 on the world religions course and the institution of that in many schools. We have followed the history of that course and with the new organization in the intermediate and secondary schools–you have the statistics in front of you; they are better than what we can get because we have not been able to get them anywhere–the numbers that are taking world religions in the secondary schools in the public system today are minimal. There are many more taking them in the Roman Catholic system than there are in the public system. The new OSIS has just about eliminated world religions. This is one of the major reasons we feel there has to be some obligation there; otherwise, students are not going to take it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Number one, I think we can ask for that information–in fact, we will ask for it and share it with you if we can get it–in terms of the number of students who are presently taking world religions. We might even ask that we get a track over a few years so we can see whether it is declining since OSIS.

Mr. McKay: If I could add a point to that, if one looks at the diploma requirements for an Ontario secondary school diploma, 4.10 of OSIS now, the criterion, one presumes at least, for including the mandatory or compulsory credits was that we wanted students at the end of secondary education to have a broad, liberal education; that is to say, we included each of the subject areas, the disciplines that are regarded as the major areas of human experience.

How then does one include things like business studies as a major area of human experience without which one cannot claim to be broadly educated, and leave out something as basic as religious experience, again, recognizing that we are talking not about a faith-nurturing program but a social sciences kind of program?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think there are several clear ways it can be done, and in fact, in some ways should be done in terms of its obligatory nature. There are very few world religion courses I have seen that have spent very much time at all dealing with a nonbelief system. They all spend their time instead running through the gamut of religious structures that have been developed around the word. That is a bias, quite frankly, which is at odds with my value system and, therefore, I would have some difficulty in a public system with that being an obligatory subject.

1420

Mr. McKay: I think we agree that should be corrected.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think it is a very difficult thing to do when the very title of the subject we are speaking of is world religions. It is very difficult to spend much time with the question of belief and nonbelief structures.

I am just saying I understand the argument you are making. I understand that the OSIS information we might find would prove that has been detrimental to the development of world religion courses, and if that is the case, I would regret that. But with the pressure we are now coming under for more mandatory subjects from various groups one way or another, I am not sure that in some ways that request does not work against you–that is, I guess, what I am suggesting–rather than for you.

Dr. Girhiny: What I would like to make sure of is that the preoccupation with that point not jeopardize the program itself. As I say, the main thrust is that we have such available. Once it is available, if it does fall the way of other world religion programs, as we understand they have, either in the actual taking by students or in the program development aspect, then those are matters that could be addressed and corrected and made consistent with the goals and objectives that we set out now. If we do not get that first step of saying yes, it is something we are committed to and we want to have there in place, then we will not have to worry about whether it is obligatory or not. I would hate to see a focus on an obligation or mandatory credits and all the things that attend thereto detract from the main thrust, which is to have the program.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think you made your point quite well.

The Vice-Chairman: We have made note of your request for some enrolment data on world religion courses.

Mr. Palmer: I would be surprised if it is over 1,500 in the public schools this year. It has just gradually been going down from about 2,500 three years ago, and that was before OSIS.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Can we get the statistics on the basis of pre-OSIS, post-OSIS, but can we also get them by board? Is it possible that we can make the request? I am just asking that we make the request–

The Vice-Chairman: It is certainly possible that we make the request. Whether or not the information–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: –so that we can get a handle on whether it is more successful in some areas than others. It would be interesting to see, and then we can find out why.

Dr. Girhiny: Some of the old statistics are available in the ministry statistical publications. You can get some idea from there.

Mr. Mahoney: I wonder if you could expand a little bit for me on the nature of the course. When you talk in terms of multifaith religious education, when I look at the makeup of your organization and the groups that are involved, are you talking about teaching the teachings of the individual religions in one course, in many separate courses that would be optional for the student to take; or are we talking about it from a doctrine point of view, a historical point of view? Maybe you could help me out.

Dr. Girhiny: Can you separate your questions as to elementary and secondary to give me a point of reference?

Mr. Mahoney: You can separate the answers, if you like.

Dr. Girhiny: I think we are back to the last time, where we need about three or four weeks again.

First, without trying to sidestep the issue, let me say that our hope is that the task force that is appointed will come to grips with that question in detail. We are not trying to determine in advance the specifics that you are referring to. Our indication from around the world is that if the broad general framework is in place, if the goals, philosophies and objectives are there, then it is much better to develop it at the most local of all levels with the involvement of the parents, teachers, students, community leaders, religious leaders and so forth. If it is done in that fashion, the public resistance is virtually nonexistent, public support is very strong and you end up with a very good program.

The components that you mentioned would all, in our estimation, be part of the program at various stages. At the elementary level, it would basically be making people aware of the religious dimensions that exist within the world and within the community. It is a raising of awareness, a desensitizing, a removal from the prejudice or biases which may already be present or precluding biases or prejudices from starting.

It is in a sense then a general awareness, sensitization or desensitization envisagement that we have. As a student becomes older and has a better understanding and ability to grasp abstract concepts, to which extent is very much a part of religion, then those concepts would be introduced.

The whole area of religious education involves a change within the individual. It is emotional, physical and intellectual. All of these things are part of the religious dimension of a person. To make people aware that these things exist for you, for me and for someone else in a different fashion is really the thrust of multiculturalism and also multifaith education.

You would be having education about other religions taking place so that people have some idea of what these belief structures are and why they came about. You would see the place religion has had in history. We dealt with that last time in July. The social, historical, religious and academic belief principles all would end up being part of the program at various levels, depending on the student's ability to deal with that.

Mr. Mahoney: Do you not run the risk in the broadest sense of almost creating a generic student from a religious point of view as opposed to the current practice where in many of the faiths, outside of the Roman Catholic system, religious beliefs are taught through Sunday school, the church and the home? If you are going to create what almost amounts to a melting pot of religions in one multifaith course for these young people at elementary or secondary and at whatever level of advanced education you want to move to, it just seems to me you are almost being counterproductive to what I would have thought would have been your goal. You are not ultimately teaching your faith, whatever that faith would be; you are teaching multifaith. In that sense of promoting religious study in a nonreligious school, you are teaching it on a generic basis. It just strikes me as almost being contrary to what I would have thought your goals would be.

Dr. Girhiny: I did not address one part of your preamble and I think it is appropriate to address that and respond to your question right now.

The nature of our group, in the sense of membership, is still stated there. We have established an interfaith advisory group. Members of that group were present with us at our meeting with the minister, which did take place

on September 1, and those members of other communities, non-Christian communities, would not be willing participants in an exclusively Christian-oriented program.

I think their presence is tacit approval and their statements vocalize their approval that they, too, believe that in the broader dimensions of what we wish to achieve it is very essential that we have a multifaith approach and that we have to give up something to do, which would be to give up that nurturing dimension which is presently possible under the regulation where a particular minister of a particular denomination can come into the school for those two half-hours or for some period of time and actually develop the nurturing in a particular religious persuasion.

Yes, to some extent, it may seem counterproductive, but that would mean you are looking at our group as being one which is trying to promote strictly a particular singular religious point of view. We have gone through that conflict and that agonizing and we believe it is essential for students to be made aware of the multibeliefs that exist within the world and to sensitize them to the work and merit of each one of those. Whether they particularly ascribe to them or not is an entirely different matter.

1430

Mr. McKay: To take up your metaphor of the melting pot, I think we would prefer the metaphor of a mosaic because our intention is not, in effect, to create a melting pot situation, but to create an understanding and awareness of the religions of the world.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess my only concern is that for it to truly reflect your statement in your brief that deals with religious traditions that are part of contemporary society, it would be an amazing course.

Mr. McKay: We think it would be an amazing course.

Mr. Mahoney: It really would be very all-encompassing and if it were to truly reflect that, it would take a very specialized educator to impart it.

By way of comment, I do not have difficulty with the broad concept. I would have some difficulty with it being mandatory, however, because if a child and a parent together wish to decide in a public system that they do not wish to take that particular course, I think that should clearly be their right. I think it could be an exciting course developed as an option.

Mr. McKay: We recognize that the exemption thing would have to be looked at very carefully and that would be one of the things the task force would need to give a great deal of attention to. I do not think we are proposing necessarily that there would be absolutely no provision for exemption, but that runs into a lot of problems, particularly at the elementary level where integration is the preferred methodology.

Mr. Palmer: I have just two points to add to what has been said. One is that about 1977 or 1978 we wrestled with this as a commission and we finally came to the conclusion in the late 1970s that the only way we could have truly a course on religious education in the public schools would be to have it on a multicultural facet. We have been working towards that goal for that last 10 years, so it is nothing new for us who have been working in that area. I think Mrs. O'Neill could tell you that back in 1984 we approached the Carleton Board of Education to see if it would be willing to do something in the form of an experimental course in this area. It never did develop, but at least we have been trying to get some of these experimental programs throughout the province, but nothing has been really established by any of the boards.

We still feel that the closer to the school that the curriculum can be established, the better it will be for the educational purposes of our children in Ontario.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Palmer. I am not sure if that is what Mrs. O'Neill was going to tell us or not, but she indicated with her hand a minute ago that she wanted the floor.

Mrs. O'Neill: I must say, gentlemen, I know you as very patient, long-suffering men.

Mr. Mahoney: Are you going to expand on that?

Mrs. O'Neill: They have intimated how long they have been working, how quietly and how persistently, and how over and over again there are 400 reasons presented to them why they cannot contribute a very important part of the curriculum in the schools. For that persistence and long-suffering, I commend you.

I feel it is a very good brief. I am wondering what your role has been or how aware you are of the interministerial committee that is meeting right now on the multifaith curriculum, the one that is from the Ministry of Citizenship as well as the Ministry of Education, and has really arisen, I presume, although it was already moving on the private members' bill of Mr. Allen.

Dr. Girhiny: Of what we are aware of officially is the minister's statement to us on September 1, in which he indicated, as he

indicated in the Legislature, that he had established contact with another ministry with the intention of trying to strike such an interfaith advisory group. But he indicated he had no idea of the composition or the direction, whether this group would set its own direction. He had hoped it would be part of its mandate to establish its own mandate.

I asked afterwards specific questions as to whether it was going to take this forward as a fait accompli, had it gone through to Management Board or wherever. The response I received from his staff seemed to indicate that the direction of this endeavour had not really been clearly defined yet as to whether it was going to try to collect together a bunch of vague ideas and present that or try to get the concept of the group established first, then go and have it establish a mandate and then come back to the Legislature or to cabinet with the mandate it seeks for itself.

Mrs. O'Neill: And you are not involved in any of that at the moment?

Dr. Girhiny: No, we are not. We have not been asked. We have indicated our willingness for many years to take on leadership in this area. To my regret, it appeared that the minister had been advised to the contrary on this. Our statement had been that we were not prepared from a standpoint of manpower or finances to develop a multifaith program for Ontario, but that we were quite prepared to provide leadership and to try to take on the challenge. The minister seemed to indicate that someone had told him we did not want to take on any responsibility in that area. While it was not my part to speak out at that meeting, I have done everything in my power to speak out since that time to try to correct that impression with everyone concerned.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am glad I have given you another opportunity.

Dr. Girhiny: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am very sorry I was not at that meeting and I certainly had not been aware that that was the minister's understanding or I would have been able to help correct it, I think.

You say there are a thousand people out there taking world religions. What kind of teacher preparation are the people who are teaching that course getting at the moment? Is it strictly voluntary teaching of these courses? Does it depend on a teacher being in a given school where the course is offered? That kind of thing is what I am asking.

Dr. Girhiny: There is, to my knowledge–and Mr. McKay can correct me if I am wrong–no specific program for world religions. It is an adjunct to either history or social science majors. I have been out of that fine line for about five years and I have to be careful I do not say something that has changed in five years, although I try to stay on top of it.

There are no academic institutions specifically preparing teachers for that. There is no certificate endorsement in that particular discipline. That is one of the reasons we are suggesting strongly that nothing will happen until you have all the little pieces in place. One of the major pieces is people capable of teaching the subject. Of course, the question always is, which comes first? Do you have the demand and then fill it with personnel or do you establish personnel and then establish demand? I think in this case we ought to have some personnel very quickly, very much in line with the demand establishment, which seems to be happening whether we want to have it happen or not.

The question of religious education has been certainly heightened in the press and in public awareness. Considerable credit must be given to Bishop Bothwell and to the Anglican community which has certainly put a great deal of thrust, time, energy and money into this over the past couple of years. We would like to think this is also because of our efforts, possibly also because its time has come and possibly because the United States is now moving in that direction, as well as Britain, the Netherlands and a number of other countries.

I have noticed with interest that our minister received the minister, I believe, of the Netherlands recently. I do not know whether they discussed religious education; I hope they did, because the Netherlands certainly mirrors our situation here in Ontario very much. What it has done there is very amazing. I am not sure we want to repeat all its errors, but I think we would like to study and make some new ones and learn from those and save ourselves the ones it did go through.

Mrs. O'Neill: At the moment you are saying that most of the people teaching this subject are likely from the sociology background.

Dr. Girhiny: Or history.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like to say two things. I am very happy that since the time I was associated with your group you have broadened it, it seems to me considerably, to the non-Christian faiths. That is not easy to do, as I know from experience. The other thing I would like to tell you, just as a point of interest, is that we did have the minister of education from Britain visit

us and the ministry. The minister and I both spoke to her about religious education in Britain, and that is one of the areas you have used as a resource.

Dr. Girhiny: Right.

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Mrs. O'Neill: It is certainly not dead as a subject of discussion. I guess we just need people like you to continue to remind us to find a way to attend to the needs that seem to be growing there, in whatever acceptable fashion each community can receive them. Thanks again for coming today.

Dr. Girhiny: Thank you for having us.

Madam Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the commission for its contribution to our committee.

Dr. Girhiny: We would be only too happy to invite ourselves any other time you are getting together. If you do not invite us, we will invite ourselves.

Madam Chairman: I am not sure whether that is an invitation or a warning.

Dr. Girhiny: Take it in the politest of all senses–an invitation from you.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to our next presenters, I have a bulletin for members concerning our room location tomorrow. L'Association internationale des parlementaires de langue française, AIPLF, has kindly agreed to hold its conference in another room tomorrow morning so that we can have access to room 151. We will be holding both Mr. Dennis's and Mr. Radwanski's presentations in room 151, the Amethyst Room. Please note on your schedules that we will be starting in room 151 at 9:30 in the morning.

Interjection: Is that why you were late coming back?

Madam Chairman: No. I was actually at a press conference for the Daily Bread food drive, all in a good cause.

I would like to welcome the York Region Board of Education to our committee today. It is nice to see you here. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation time and we are hoping that will also include a generous amount of time for members to ask you questions. Please start whenever you are ready; begin by introducing yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

YORK REGION BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Bowes: I am Harry Bowes, trustee for the York Region Board of Education. On my left is Wayne Houston, superintendent of schools for the York region board, and on my right is Ken Cluley, principal of Unionville High School.

York region is an area of about 650 square miles consisting of nine municipalities stretching from Steeles Avenue to Lake Simcoe on the north, bounded on the east by Durham region and on the west by Peel and Simcoe regions. We have more than 58,000 students and approximately 4,500 employees. I did not want you to get us mixed up with three of those other Yorks in Metropolitan Toronto.

We appreciate the opportunity to appear this afternoon. This paper addresses the issues of streaming, grade promotion, semestering and OSIS and outlines the position of the York Region Board of Education.

First, the York Region Board of Education believes strongly in the merits of OSIS. It is concerned that change for the sake of change may be the driving force behind this government review and that teachers working through OSIS and experiencing successes with their students will become discouraged by yet another educational shift in direction before full implementation of a very fine document is achieved.

Solidly founded upon learning principles that are directly related to the 13 goals of education, OSIS is one of best educational documents to be produced in the past 50 years. It builds on The Formative Years and P1J1 and not only provides a consistent approach to education over the different panels over a number of years, but also addresses the whole student, not just educational outcomes.

The strengths of the document should be no surprise. In comparison with the secondary education review project and the Renewal of Secondary Education reports, OSIS is the best blending of input from educational and parent groups and the best compilation of their expertise. It is rational, reasonable and attainable. Whatever minor changes may be necessary to improve OSIS should be considered, but wholesale revamping or abandonment of the document would be a mistake.

I am reminded of an appearance before this committee in June, where one of the MPPs quoted a title from 400 BC, and ever since that time we have been hearing quotes about the problems with education. I would like to read something that was stated a few years ago: "I would today like to inform members that the Ministry of Education is taking a further related step to refine and improve the quality of

education in the elementary and secondary schools of Ontario."

Another government, another colour, 12 years ago. In every speech from the throne we seem to be hearing the same thing. We think it is like a plant. If you keep digging up that plant to look at the roots, eventually that plant is going to die.

Second is semestering. Both advantages and disadvantages must be considered when weighing the option of semestering. The ideal situation would be where combinations of full and partial credits could be taken concurrently by a student. As this is rarely an option, a mixture of schools that offers both the semestered and nonsemestered credit systems and a flexible enrolment policy is the most feasible.

Semestering provides students who can concentrate for short periods of time, with the opportunity to move on to something new more quickly. It provides lots of opportunities for students to explore a number of different subject areas. It allows students to concentrate on fewer subjects with fewer teachers, reduces student-teacher contacts and facilitates those students returning to school to complete their diplomas. The concept of subject clustering on a semestered basis has proven to be an effective motivator with adult learners, and the option of taking two subjects in one year encourages fast-tracking by a number of high school students.

But there are also drawbacks to be considered in the evaluation of semestering. Illness seriously affects both instructional and study time and jeopardizes the attaining of a credit much more so than in a nonsemestered system. Those students who benefit from daily contact with one teacher over the course of an entire year find themselves switching the majority of their teachers once, possibly twice, in a school year. In subjects where the concept and/or skill development is cumulative, continuity is broken by semestering, creating in some instances up to a 12-month time gap, which could result in an inordinate loss of learning. Semestering also has a detrimental effect on optional subjects. Students tend to opt for compulsory courses when given the greater variety of choices offered in a semestered program.

The question of semestering needs careful assessment. We must pay particular attention to the individual learning styles of students as they are affected by the semestered and nonsemestered systems. It would seem reasonable that both options remain available so that students can choose the system which best suits their needs.

Third, grade promotion: If grade promotion means that students within a secondary context–and I stress, within a secondary context–repeat the same material in all subjects because of the inability to succeed in one, then this board is unalterably opposed to the concept. It would be a retrograde step that denies the fundamental differences and needs of our students.

Fourth, streaming: It is the belief of the York Region Board of Education that streaming occurs too early in the secondary panel. Students moving from grade 8 to grade 9 are automatically streamed, irrespective of the recommendations of the elementary panel by the right of the parent. Many important changes can take place in the course of a year, and an accurate recommendation at the end of grade 8 could be completely wrong by the end of grade 9.

By deferring the streaming process for at least one year, educators are able to focus on the learner in a way similar to that in the elementary school. Students have the opportunity to adjust to the new secondary environment and understand the curriculum from firsthand experience; teachers in the secondary panel have the time to appraise students more accurately and recommend the appropriate course of study; students have more time to explore a variety of options that may stimulate an undiscovered interest or talent; and parents have the opportunity to become better informed about their children's options.

The postponement of streaming would facilitate better streaming in the higher grades, where it is necessary to match teacher strengths and expertise with students' abilities, where maximum use of student time gains new importance and where the organized provision of resources is essential. The purpose of streaming is to provide a richer learning environment. Although other ways of promoting this type of environment should be explored, streaming does offer the option of a multilevel program that can be tailored to each student's particular needs.

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This flexibility must be protected. In actuality, the real problem does not lie in the streaming itself. Rather, it lies in inappropriate streaming resulting from placement too early in the secondary panel. There is a need to refocus on every student in grade 9, allowing as much latitude as possible in as many levels as possible, so that when the streaming does occur, it produces the best possible program at the most appropriate level for every student in the school.

The York Region Board of Education has outlined its positions on each of the four areas: streaming, grade promotion, semestering and OSIS. In the light of these positions, the York Region Board of Education wishes to make the following recommendations:

1. That minor changes necessary to improve OSIS be considered but that wholesale revamping or abandonment of this document be avoided at all costs.

2. That the concept of subject clustering on a semestered basis be encouraged.

3. That both semestered and nonsemestered credit systems remain available so that students can choose a system which best suits their needs.

4. That streaming does not occur until each student has completed one year in high school.

5. That the idea of grade promotion be abandoned.

I thank you. I am not sure whether Wayne or Ken has something to add to that. We would be willing to answer any questions, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Bowes. Certainly a number of the comments you have made we have heard from other presenters to the committee. In fact, I think you may well have either been talking to Duncan Green or be thinking along the same wavelengths, because he gave almost the identical analogy about pulling the plant up by its roots. We have heard that a number of times, not to completely reverse the flow of education in Ontario.

We have a number of questioners: Mr. Keyes, Mrs. O'Neill and Mr. Reycraft.

Mr. Keyes: Harry, you may want to turn this over to Wayne. I appreciate the brief and you did touch on the areas. However, my disappointment was with the way you just jumped over grade promotion and did not touch it at all, other than as a title. You gave a qualification and then said that if it means–I do not need to requote your words–then it should be abandoned, but you totally ignored looking at all of the elementary level in this presentation, and we are trying to look at both the elementary and secondary levels.

I would suggest that, in the secondary panel, we have got away from grade promotion because of the credit system, and I think basically that has been looked at. But we are doing a lot of listening to people about doing away with grade promotion at the elementary level, and there have been recommendations that it might be on a division basis, etc.

I do not want to make the guess that you both are mainly high school oriented, but I am assuming that perhaps, from your own background, Mr. Houston, and also, Ken, from your principalship. Would any of the three of you venture comments about the elementary panel as far as promotion is concerned?

Mr. Houston: Are you talking about grade retention primarily?

Mr. Keyes: No; I never like to talk about retention. I prefer to talk about promotion. It is a more positive way of looking at it, because in the high school level you have the credit system and you have a "body of knowledge" that you put before a student; then you expect him to accomplish it and get a credit for that in that particular area, whether it be world religions, which we have just heard about, or some other field such as science.

But when we go back to an elementary one, I think the staff would like to hear the views of the York board on that.

Mr. Houston: Basically, the views are that we would like to see every student promoted. The things that we would want to consider any time we are looking at students who perhaps are not measuring up to the level we would have liked–the whole student, aspects of the whole student and not simply academic progress.

We would like to look at things like: the actual progress during the year; the pattern of progress during the past few years; the overall achievement that they have accomplished compared to grade level; their health, in case there were any health problems; work habits the student has developed; their ability to organize, to complete tasks; their maturity level; a possible traumatic event in the child's life in the past year that may have adversely affected them, and their overall ability.

We believe that you have to take into account all of those things when you are looking at children moving on in grade promotion or the possibility that they would be held for another year in that grade. We should also take a look at the possibility that they are exceptional students or that they are English-as-a-second-language students, because those students have to be assessed with particular sensitivity.

Whenever that decision is being made about the promotion of a student, we want to have a certain number of things in place before the decision is made, such questions as: Have the parents have been informed very early in the year about the difficulties? Has special assistance been given to the student from either ESL, special ed teachers, psychologists, speech therapists or whatever? Have programs been adapted

for the students during that period of time to give them a chance to overcome it?

In other words, we want to make sure that we have given every possible method of assistance that we have at our disposal to the student before we ever take the negative response. All our principals in elementary schools are aware of those parameters that we set. We certainly try to be as positive as you would like us to be.

At the same time, there are sometimes hard decisions that are made with regard to what is best for the student in the long run. We do not back away from the stand that we take that, when we do come to the decision and we feel it is in the best interests of the student, with the parents involved and so on, we sometimes do recommend that students be retained for a year to make sure that they have the basic requirements for them to move on.

Mr. Keyes: I appreciate Mr. Houston's having kind of read that into the record. It is just that the brief, as read, if you did not add to it, would suggest that it had not looked at the issue of grade promotion.

However, there is still one area you have not really touched on, and that is the whole business, if we are going to continue to take all those factors into consideration, of whether we need to worry about grades at all at any level, either elementary or secondary. In secondary we have accomplished it on credits. Why then bother to have grades at all in the elementary division?

Mr. Houston: I think there are levels of achievement that we expect our students to achieve. For instance, in Primary 1, Junior 1, there are primary division requisites whereby we say a student should have achieved this kind of ability by the end of grade 3; then there are the junior requirements and so on. So there is a sort of measurement.

Whether you disbanded the years and said, "You have to pass the primary division, you have to pass the junior division, then the intermediate division and so on," that is a matter of great discussion. To be able to distinguish exactly between what a grade 1 student and a grade 2 student should be achieving is difficult.

Even to say that they are ready for the junior division is sometimes difficult. It is a task that we work at consistently, but it is an inexact science, to say the least. It is one in which we have to try to get as many people as possible involved in to make the best decision for the student.

Mr. Keyes: We have a number who are advocating that it should be on a divisional basis. Again, I just wanted to see your comment.

Last, just to be somewhat controversial, in the middle of page 4 you had said, in support of streaming, that it is the responsibility to match teachers' strengths and expertise with students' abilities. So that, to be controversial, suggests that the brightest teachers should be with the brightest students. I hope you might clarify that, because those who are not as academically oriented perhaps require the stronger teacher in order to maximize those students' output.

Mr. Houston: I have my own opinion, but Mr. Cluley, would you like to respond to this?

Mr. Cluley: Thank you. I think you are assuming we meant a match of ability levels between teachers and students.

Mr. Keyes: I am suggesting how it might be read.

Mr. Cluley: That is quite possible. We will try to correct that. I think what we are suggesting is that a lot of training of teaching staff is required in being as aware as possible of differences in student ability levels and in ways that students learn–learning styles, if you will, as well.

We are doing a lot of work in that area right now. I suppose it is not as much a match of abilities as it is making all teachers as sensitive as possible to the group of students whom they are working with and to the individual differences within each of those groups. That would essentially be my answer.

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Mr. Bowes: I have my own opinion on streaming, and I think the word "streaming" should be obliterated from the alphabet altogether. What we are doing really is not streaming, but we are treating each student as an individual and trying to place him or her in an appropriate program. This involves the student, the teacher, the guidance counsellor and the parent. The ultimate responsibility and decision in this is up to the parent.

The problem is trying to get across to the parents that they should take more interest in the child's future and be involved with the school in where that child is placed. We have to come up with a new name for the placing of pupils in proper programs, POP or something like that, but I wish we would forget about the word "streaming." Streaming is a word that I think is inappropriate, really.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you very much.

Mrs. O'Neill: I guess I am going to pick up exactly where you left off there. This sentence sort of jumped out of your brief at me, because I know that people have intimated this throughout

our hearings. I know I wrestled with this in my previous role, but you have stated it very clearly here: "Students moving from grade 8 to 9 are automatically streamed irrespective of the recommendations of the elementary school by the right of the parent."

I would like you to say a little more about that. That is a very strong statement. Are you suggesting that the parents at this particular point, which is an extremely important point in education, are setting goals for their children without proper consultation with the elementary school and are maybe setting goals that you intimate here may be unrealistic? I am really intrigued by that sentence.

Mr. Cluley: I will react. We were very concerned. I am in a fairly upwardly mobile, up-scale community in Unionville. We were really working hard. We recognize that now in a composite secondary school we have about 10 per cent of our students in the general level and 90 per cent in the advanced level. What that means in reality is that probably close to a third of the students in each of our advanced classes would be better served by the curriculum and the teaching strategies evaluation techniques that are used in our general-level programs.

We worked very hard. We developed special programs in liaising with the elementary schools, the guidance counsellors and the two panels working together to move what was originally an 80-20 split to something we felt would be more appropriate. In fact, after all our work, it has moved to 90-10. I think there was a feeling on the part of the parents that if we were doing all this much talking about it, there must be some major concern with general-level programming. They felt they had better protect their students from the general-level program by putting them in the advanced level.

We worked really hard and, I think, intelligently in that pursuit, yet it really has not worked in terms of what we feel is a better matchup. We hope then that the nonstreaming approach is more than simply a way of solving the problem by no longer having two categories.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is the 90-10 this year's figure?

Mr. Cluley: Last year's figure.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is Unionville the only nucleus where this is happening, or did you make this up right across your entire board?

Mr. Cluley: No; it does vary across the board, but certainly in the suburban south of the board, which would include Woodbridge, Thornhill, Richmond Hill, Unionville and Markham, that percentage would be relatively close, between 80 per cent and 90 per cent in the advanced level.

Mrs. O'Neill: How long have you been doing this? You said you had 80-20; now you have 90-10.

Mr. Cluley: We are nonstreaming, in part, this year.

Mrs. O'Neill: So you are actually doing what you said in your brief should be done.

Mr. Cluley: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is very interesting. To get back to this, then, have you had a reading that people drop back into the general level at either grade 10 or grade 11?

Mr. Cluley: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: You have enough data on that.

Mr. Cluley: Yes, they do.

Mrs. O'Neill: When you are doing the nonstreaming in grade 9, would you suggest you are offering things at the general level?

Mr. Cluley: We are dealing in only two subjects this year, in English and mathematics, and we have taken two different approaches. In the English classes, in fact, the students are mixed fully, with no stream at all. In the math, we are taking that in two steps and we are still identifying some streaming and some difference. We are recognizing that in a cumulative subject like math, the diagnostic tools for identifying where students are best placed, and perhaps the mental set of math teachers, are a little different from those of the English teachers, so we are doing an extra step in the process of moving towards nonstreaming with math.

It is working quite well. The ultimate result, obviously, is to develop the observational skills of teachers in diagnosing individual differences and in developing appropriate resource materials to be used in teaching, and those things are happening.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. O'Neill, Mr. Jackson had a supplementary. Do you want to finish exploring that point?

Mrs. O'Neill: I have a couple more, if I may, before I lose my train of thought. Can you write yours down, Mr. Jackson, so you will not forget yours?

Obviously, I can see why this sentence popped off the page at me now. On the nonstreaming, the parents and the students are totally aware of what you are doing, and you will then be doing the same kind of counselling at the end of this grade 9 year that you would normally have done at the end of the grade 8 year?

Mr. Cluley: All the time it is continuous.

Mrs. O'Neill: You have no intention of making what you are doing now go on to grade 10, or do you? Maybe I am asking for secrets out of the boardroom or something.

Mr. Houston: I would like to respond to that. What is happening in Ken Cluley's school is also happening at Milliken Mills high school. It is a pilot project in our board to see whether or not it is feasible to have all students enter one grade without the streaming being done at that point.

Our thinking is that there is a double trauma when students go from grade 8 to grade 9. First of all, they go from a rather small elementary school to a large secondary school, and the very size of it is a trauma to a lot of students. To ask them at the same time to make decisions that are going to affect their whole life when they are 13 years old is, to us, a bit much. So we are taking a look, with a number of teachers who have done a lot of planning over the summer and so on and devised the courses, at trying to set out a plan that could be used in other schools if we find it is successful. I guess we are doing a little bit of prognostication here with what might happen with the ministry and so on, and we want to be ready if it happens that streaming is abandoned or delayed.

Ken's school volunteered to do this. In fact, a couple of teachers from his school were very keen on setting out on this project. It was funded by our board and is in place now in two schools. We hope the results of that will be something that perhaps your committee or the Ministry of Education will find useful when they take decisions on streaming or the delaying of streaming.

Mr. McLean: What happens if you are all wrong?

Mr. Houston: If we are all wrong, we will say that.

Mrs. O'Neill: My final question is on basic. Is there any basic-level programming for grade 9 students in York?

Mr. Houston: Yes, there is.

Mrs. O'Neill: How do they get there?

Mr. Houston: In the same way they would get into either of the other streams. They are recommended by their teachers, the parents and so on, and they decide upon it. Sometimes they do cross over from one stream to another rather than, as you said, drop back. You refer to it as crossing over.

Mrs. O'Neill: So they are not involved in this experiment at all. They would be outside this pilot project.

Mr. Houston: Actually, those students who are in that project would include some basic-level students.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much. Sorry, Mr. Jackson, to be so long.

Mr. Jackson: I now know how Yvonne O'Neill as a teacher handled multiple hands being raised in a classroom.

Mrs. O'Neill: I was good at that, Cam.

Mr. Jackson: Yes. It improved their writing skills, too. Just do not hold it against me. I did not write my question down because, like all my questions, it is rather simple.

Mrs. O'Neill: It was a long time ago, but I was good at it.

Mr. Jackson: My question was to build on Yvonne's with respect to the pilot project and its effect on streaming or ability grouping. My question would be to tie that in to your board's thoughts on semestering and your recommendation to do more subject clustering. Is there a linkage there in terms of your de-emphasizing streaming in grades 9 and 10 and an effort by the board, which I guess is an admission by the board, to achieve some rather desired results with some subject clustering in semestered schools as well, to go along with that? I got your Ben Franklin checklist when I read semestering. I did not hear what you were doing specifically as a board. I apologize for being late. Maybe you dealt with that during your presentation. Could you comment about that?

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Mr. Bowes: Well, Cameron, you know trustees need a lot of help, and Yvonne knows that.

Mr. Jackson: Now, Harry, you and I have known each other for almost 20 years.

Mr. Bowes: We have both systems, but I think probably Wayne knows the breakdown of the system, the percentage of semestered schools.

Mr. Houston: We have more traditional schools than semestered but, we try to make sure there is one semestered school in each geographical area so the student has the right to choose which kind of school, which kind of program he would like to take part in. It is also a question of survival in that we have a lot of students transferring from other boards where they have both semestering and traditional. We want to have a school where they can fit into the same kind of system, if that is what they wish. So we do have both and we have a mix. That is the way

we would like to keep it. It seems to be working fairly well.

Mr. Jackson: Can I interpret that as saying that if there were a movement to move more towards semestered schools, you, as a board, would be more careful to examine how that was happening?

Mr. Houston: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: Do you have a policy in place with respect to what you have just indicated to us or is it just understood?

Mr. Houston: I think it is an understanding.

Mr. Jackson: Very good. We are getting quite a lot of information on semestering and typical board reactions, and we are seeing a movement more towards the approach that you–I was corrected at one point; I suggested it was a ministry policy that there be one in every jurisdiction, and I was corrected and told it was not. It was just damn good common sense to do it that way. Your board is to be commended.

Mr. Reycraft: I wonder if I could clarify a couple of things from previous answers. On the 90-10 ratio that you talked about, advanced courses to general-level courses, was that just in grade 9 or right through the secondary school?

Mr. Cluley: It is grade 9. That ratio would change somewhat as the grades increase. It would move to about 80-20 in grade 10 and 75-25 in grades 11 and 12, and of course grade 13, as you know, is nothing but advanced or OAC.

Mr. Reycraft: You talked about the ratio between numbers in general-level courses and advanced-level courses, but you did not mention basic-level courses. Is or was the school in Unionville a fully composite school, offering courses at all three levels of difficulty?

Mr. Cluley: Yes, it is. You would have to understand our structure in that we have one school in the south that offers essentially basic programs only. A lot of the students who would be taking a basic-level program would go to that school. If they wish to be in a composite school, they may, but there is a difficulty floating the full range of basic-level programs in Unionville High School, for example, so we have very few basic-level classes.

Mr. Reycraft: So the nonstreaming pilot that you are doing really is only nonstreaming as far as the two highest levels of difficulty are concerned. It does not deal with the basic-level students.

Mr. Cluley: In terms of numbers, yes.

Mr. Reycraft: Somebody referred to the sort of double trauma that the kids go through–I think it was Mr. Houston–in going from a small elementary school to a big secondary school and having to deal with the change from a non-streamed system to a streamed system at the same time.

There is really a third trauma, is there not? They also have to familiarize themselves with a credit system for the first time. It occurs to me that perhaps dealing with the credit system sometimes clouds the other issue of dealing with courses at three different levels of difficulty, that students tend to look at the choices of subjects available and concentrate on that, but do not concentrate to the same extent on the levels of difficulty that are available to them. Is that a fair observation, do you think?

Mr. Houston: It is a fair observation. Students going into grade 9 basically tend to choose about five or six compulsory subject areas. It is not a great difficulty for them to choose a subject area, but it is a much more difficult decision for them to choose the level. They have a few optional subjects to choose as well, but by and large the majority of classes they choose tend to be very uniform.

Mr. Reycraft: So mixed timetables in grade 9 in your other secondary schools are not very common. They tend to take courses all at one level of difficulty. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. Houston: No. I am saying they take math, science, history. They all take those subject areas in grade 9, but the level may vary. A student may take advanced-level English, advanced-level math, advanced-level science, general-level geography. The subject areas they study tend to be very similar.

Mr. Reycraft: Do you have any handle on what percentage of the timetables would be of mixed levels of difficulty?

Mr. Houston: I do not have the data on that.

Mr. Bowes: I would like to make one comment on OSIS, that if there were going to be any changes, they be small; but if there were, that the technical subjects, business subjects and optional subjects be made more attractive to the students in the schools. That is our opinion.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for that final comment, Mr. Bowes. We very much appreciate your presentation and your contribution to our committee today.

Our next presentation will be by the Ontario Public School Trustees' Association. Perhaps you could come forward, please. I believe there

are five members involved in the presentation, so you may either wish to bring up a fifth chair or go around to the first chair on the member's side.

Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. Welcome, Arlene. It is nice to see you again.

Mrs. Wright: Again.

Madam Chairman: Again and still. We always value your presentations.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

NORTHERN ONTARIO SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Wright: It is certainly a pleasure for us to be here. I have a quick introduction of the people who are with me at the table. This is the ad hoc committee from OPSTA and the Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association that put together this report.

The chairman, Cheryl Miller, is unable to be here today, but Ken Campbell is here from Lennox and Addington; Heather Gardiner from Victoria county; Suzan Hall from Etobicoke, and Bob Whitehead from the north shore. My name is Arlene Wright and I have the honour of being president of the association. We also have with us Bill Phillips, our executive director, and Marie Pierce, our director of policy.

As is our usual practice, we are all sharing in this. The four members of the committee will be speaking to each issue and certainly will be available for any questions the members of the select committee may have. I would like to introduce our brief and I will conclude it.

The Ontario Public School Trustees' Association and the Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association welcome the opportunity to appear jointly before the legislative select committee on education and to aid the committee in its deliberations on the current state of the educational system in this province.

Before proceeding to present the views of our associations on the four issues specified by the select committee, it is relevant to reiterate our views on the philosophy and fundamental goals of education. Views on the four issues depend to a large extent on one's view of the goals of the education system and the philosophy of that system.

We would like to restate our position that public education must provide opportunities for all learners to acquire knowledge and skills, and must be flexible, responsive and adaptive to the specific needs and ability of the learner. In addition to ensuring competency in core curriculum areas, the public school system must offer a wide variety of programs and instructional strategies which can accommodate the differing abilities and goals of learners. Public education is a co-operative process involving the individual, the community and society. It has to provide a structure and model to encourage the development of respect, responsibility and resourcefulness, and to foster a spirit of trust and co-operation.

It is within that context that OPSTA and NOSTA, of which Edna Kidd, the president, is unable to be with us as well today, will examine OSIS, streaming, semestering and grade promotion.

1520

Mrs. Gardiner: My name is Heather Gardiner. I am from Victoria county. I would like to bring to you the comments of the committee on OSIS.

Implemented in 1984, OSIS was the culmination of a four-year review of secondary schools. It has been in effect for barely four years and in some instances, the curriculum guidelines required for the full implementation of OSIS have not yet been completed.

The OSIS credit system tends to cover a middle line in which about half of the secondary school program is obligatory and about half is elective. While requiring a core understanding of certain subjects, it also provides for flexibility for students in course selection.

Courses are offered at advanced, general and basic levels of difficulty. Students are able to choose courses from all levels, although the six OAC courses which are required for entrance to post-secondary education programs must be at the advanced level. It must be stressed that courses, not students, are grouped according to level of difficulty.

Like any new initiative, OSIS has some drawbacks and some real merits.

The credit system as detailed by OSIS recognizes that individual students have differing abilities and interests and at the same time emphasizes competency in certain core curriculum areas by requiring the completion of 16 compulsory credits of the 30 needed for graduation. OSIS accommodates the wide diversity of needs among students.

OSIS not only provides for flexibility in terms of course selections and course level, but also provides flexibility in the amount of time spent in high school. Completing high school in four years, combining education with work or travel, and repeating courses for improved marks or

upgrading course levels are all presently occurring within the system.

But there are also some negative consequences of the credit system as currently defined by OSIS which require examination and possible change.

The number of credits required for graduation is one of the biggest drawbacks of OSIS. The current system favours the university-bound student and disadvantages those headed for college or work by requiring 30 credits for all. OPSTA and NOSTA recommend that the Ministry of Education examine the merits of a differentiated system of credits for a high school diploma that reflects the achievement of the student in both core curriculum and elective areas.

Technological studies programs have already been affected by the current OSIS requirements. A number of our member boards have expressed concern with regard to the marked drop in enrolment in technical studies programs and subsequent cancellation of courses. This is seen as a direct result of the 16 compulsory credit course requirements. Fewer students are taking technical studies due to the stringent OSIS requirements and students who might otherwise have concentrated on technological studies are not completing their program.

At a time when applied knowledge and skills are so important and the need for skilled technologists is heightened, this is very unfortunate. The Ministry of Education should examine the impact of OSIS on technological studies programs.

Since OSIS, there has been an emphasis on the development of curriculum guidelines for OACs but the development of basic-level and general-level courses is not yet complete. We recommend that the Ministry of Education correct this situation.

Teacher training at the pre-service and in-service levels and the selection process for teacher trainees have not yet reflected OSIS objectives. A diversity of teaching methods and subject strengths with an emphasis on styles of teaching and interpersonal skills appropriate to general- and basic-level courses is needed in order to best address the learning style of each student.

The credit system provides for vast possibilities in teaching strategies, curriculum co-ordination and program delivery. A system for review and evaluation of the relevance of courses at all levels, the course selection process and the overall impact of OSIS on the knowledge and skills of graduates is vital. Given the short time OSIS has been in effect and the fact that few students have, as yet, graduated from this system, we must be careful not to close off the opportunities the system offers without informed study.

Mrs. Hall: My name is Suzan Hall and I am from the Etobicoke Board of Education. I will be presenting the streaming aspect of our committee to you.

Examination of the OSIS credit system leads directly to the issue of streaming at the secondary level, and the question of whether a common program in grades 9 and 10 would ensure a common level of proficiency for all students and assist them in achieving their post-secondary education or vocational goals.

Streaming has become a dirty word in education. There is the general perception, since the Radwanski report, that streaming is something that is detrimental to the education of individuals, prevents learners from achieving their full potential and serves to place learners into slots according to their social background.

The judicious use of course and program streaming has helped to reduce the dropout rate by providing an education relevant to the individual needs of all students. A return to one program for all would disregard the importance differentiated programming has in today's schools in responding to the goals and abilities of today's student. We believe it would provide a blueprint for dropout.

Under OSIS, students may take courses from basic, general or advanced levels of difficulty and can choose to concentrate on academic, technical or business subjects. Vocational programs and co-operative education provide further opportunities for students to tailor their education to their goals and abilities. This flexibility, which is provided by the current system, must be retained.

To recommend that the credit system be abolished, and to assume that all students can learn these essentials at the same rate and in a heterogeneous grouping, is unrealistic. The partial or full abandon of streaming assumes that all students not only are at the same level of understanding when they enter high school but also can benefit from the same programs. We would argue that by further limiting the options for students, the school system will lose more students who would find that courses do not meet their own personal needs.

In addition, the abolition of streaming and the integration of all students would undermine Ontario's whole process of special education,

where a continuum of service is provided for students dependent upon individual needs. It would be difficult to justify such programs as English as a second language and programs for behavioural exceptionalities and slow learners.

The Ontario Public School Trustees' Association and the Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association recognize that the public education system has a responsibility to ensure that a provincially determined high-quality core education is provided and that all students require a basic skill level and factual background to be functional and responsible citizens. However, there has to be a balance between compulsory and optional courses if the education system is to meet both individual and societal needs.

The real problem does not lie in streaming itself. The solution is not to discontinue streaming and to eliminate the credit system but to train teachers to present the same foundation of knowledge to all students in order that the required skills and knowledge are achieved.

Instead of advocating that no options be available to grades 9 and 10 students, what is needed are more creative alternatives to the traditional education system, not a restriction of courses. However, the instruction given must be appropriate to the learner. More attention has to be focused on teacher in-service and pre-service training to meet the differing learning styles of the students. As well, adequate assessment, evaluation and placement of the student in the program and course best suited to his or her own individual abilities and learning goals are vital.

In order to take full advantage of the flexibility of the programs under OSIS, in addition to ongoing assessment and evaluation of the student's placement, transition programs must be further developed and encouraged to allow students to move from one stream to another.

1530

Mr. Whitehead: My name is Bob Whitehead and I am a trustee with the North Shore Board of Education. I am going to be discussing semestering with you.

The move to semestering at the secondary school level was accelerated by the introduction of OSIS guidelines because semestering helped to accommodate the acquisition of 30 credits in the shortest possible time. The number of secondary schools adopting some form of the semester system has increased dramatically in the past eight years.

Semestering has a number of advantages and a number of drawbacks for students and staff. Semestering lends itself more easily to fast-tracking, allows midyear adjustments for student failures, facilitates dropping in of students, is an improvement for placement of co-op students and, in most cases, allows for longer instructional periods for certain subjects.

There are some inherent disadvantages, however, to the semestering system. Poor attendance is more problematic and can result in early failure. There are problems with high-risk students and slow starters. Teaching styles must be adapted to meet the differing lengths of classes. There have been indications that semestering is not conducive to subjects such as music, math, physical education and French, which require retention and building on previously learned material. Teachers are unable to cover as much content in math and science courses as in the nonsemestered system.

The semestering system has social implications as well, in that with higher enrolment in the first semester, the school may become fragmented, requiring more effort to foster school spirit and a feeling of cohesiveness.

The semestering system has implications for teacher contracts in that teachers hired in September have to be employed for the full school year, even though they may only be required for the first semester which ends at the end of January.

An increasing problem for students graduating from a semestering system is admission to post-secondary education. While an increasing number of students are completing secondary school after the first semester, very few universities offer a February admission to their general arts program. There is no access to the specialized programs at the February entry point.

Semestering has occurred largely as a result of the strains placed on the system by OSIS. However, semestering is only one possibility for organization of the school year. Such options as an increase in instructional time and the school-year organization, particularly at the secondary level, merits consideration. A reorganized school year could also facilitate dropping in as well as increased opportunities for co-operative education and work experience.

Semestering is not the answer for all students. Flexibility is required to ensure that both semestered and nonsemestered schools are available to meet individual students' needs. However, the decision to opt for the semestered system must remain a local board decision based on community needs and the impact of semestering on academic achievement, school organization and student goals. OPSTA and NOSTA

recommend that a study of the relative merits of the semestered and nonsemestered systems be undertaken.

Mr. Campbell: My name is Ken Campbell and I am from Lennox and Addington County Board of Education. I will be dealing with the topic of grade promotion.

Grade promotion is an issue at both the elementary and secondary levels. At the elementary school level, grade promotion would be a retrograde step that denies the fundamental differences and needs of our students. Rather than having the student repeat an entire year, remediation on the subjects in which the student needs help is the present practice and the better option.

It is unrealistic to expect all young children to reach the same mastery level at the same time, particularly in the primary and junior divisions. The importance of both maturity and motivation in student learning must be taken into consideration.

The negative effects of failing a student or forcing a student to attend summer school would outweigh the benefits. Retention, particularly after grades 1 and 2, is often a nonproductive and harmful exercise. Early diagnosis, evaluation and remediation are more significant strategies than grade promotion as mechanisms to ensure a basic level of competency in students.

At the secondary level, under the current credit system of OSIS, grade promotion makes no sense. A student in grade 9, for example, should not be required to repeat the same material in all subjects because of an inability to succeed in one or two credits. Subject or credit promotion is far more conducive to effective, positive learning than is grade promotion.

Mrs. Gardiner: In conclusion, on the matter of the organization of the education process in Ontario, OPSTA and NOSTA make the following recommendations in regard to OSIS:

1. Although requiring some refinement, it is recommended that the current credit system as outlined by OSIS, which provides for vast possibilities in teaching strategies, curriculum co-ordination and program delivery, be continued until adequate time is given for schools to examine all the possibilities of this system.

2. The Ministry of Education should examine the possibility of a differentiated system of required credits for a post-secondary diploma while at the same time ensuring a basic high-quality core curriculum for all.

3. The Ministry of Education must undertake an examination of the impact of OSIS on technological studies programs.

4. The Ministry of Education must complete curriculum guidelines for all OSIS courses.

5. The teacher training and certification process must be examined to ensure that teachers are flexible and can accommodate both the wide range of learning requirements of the basic-, general- and advanced-level courses and differing learning styles and abilities of all students.

Mrs. Hall: OPSTA and NOSTA have three recommendations in regard to streaming:

1. Differential course levels which recognize individual differences in ability and educational goals and allow for maximum flexibility should be retained.

2. The Ministry of Education should develop policy guidelines to ensure consistency in board policies regarding adequate assessment, evaluation and placement procedures of all students to ensure that each student is in the best program suited to his or her individual abilities and learning goals.

3. The Ministry of Education must develop guidelines for and school boards be encouraged to further implement transition programs to enable students to move from one stream to another.

Mr. Whitehead: OPSTA and NOSTA have two recommendations with regard to semestering:

1. The Ministry of Education should undertake a study of the impact of semestering.

2. The Ministry of Education, in consultation with school boards, should examine the possibilities of an increase in instructional time, the length of the school year and the school-year organization.

Mr. Campbell: In regard to grade promotion, as early diagnosis, evaluation and remediation are more significant strategies than grade promotion as mechanisms to ensure a basic level of competency in students and, at the secondary level, subject or credit promotion is far more conducive to effective, positive learning than grade promotion, we recommend that no changes should be made to the present system of promotion.

Mrs. Hall: Public education has seen a deterioration of political resolve to support a strong public education system in this province. Recognizing that the quality of education must be continually assessed and improved does not mean that the whole system has to be revamped and changed. Our current public education system is not running on empty; it is providing a wide variety of educational opportunities to a wide variety of learners. Instead of overcorrect-

ing and overregulating the current system, what is needed is some refinement and nurturing to make a high-quality system even better.

We are prepared for questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for a very comprehensive brief. I think it is not only comprehensive but also comprehensible, which is attested to by the fact that we have five members who have indicated they have questions.

Mr. McLean: Being a member who is not from the educational community, so to speak, as a trustee or a teacher, it is nice to have the opportunity to sit here as a layperson to offer some comments, which I would like to do, as well as to ask you a question.

I appreciate your brief, because on page 5 you say, "The solution is not to discontinue streaming and to eliminate the credit system but to train teachers to present the same foundation of knowledge to all students in order that required skills and knowledge are achieved."

I think that is an excellent statement, but I want to know what I should tell some of the people in my constituency. I know of a girl who is 19 years old who can neither read nor write. I have had several people come to me wanting to know. These are students who, within the system, are taking courses they are not interested in, yet they have to continue taking those courses. I think they are some of the large percentage of students who are falling through the cracks. I am wondering how you are going to stop that, so to speak, because there is a problem of communication here. I appreciate your brief, because you are talking about the teachers and I think there is a problem here. What should I tell these people who ask me: "Who do I turn to? What do I do?"

1540

Mrs. Hall: Perhaps I can ask, when you say that students are taking courses they really do not want to be in and it is compulsory for them to do so, are you talking about one of the 16 compulsory credits?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mrs. Hall: It depends on what that compulsory credit is. Is it English? Where are the students falling down, and perhaps if it is English, at what level are they taking it and what is their ability?

Also, I think the key issue is the teaching style. I know we have a diversity of teaching styles within our system and attitudes towards teaching. For some people, teaching is their forte, it is exactly where they should be; others have got into it and have been in it for a number of years yet, in reality, they prefer to teach the subject rather than the individual. That can be a problem depending on how they approach it.

We, as boards, have responsibility there to really look closely at our teaching staff and provide a great deal of in-service, improve our teacher evaluation processes and work with our teachers to help them and, if it is absolutely impossible to help them, look at ways of perhaps removing them from that position.

I cannot answer your particular constituent's problem, but we do have a responsibility and parents have a responsibility in what they select for their children as well. Students also have a responsibility to take some ownership for their own learning.

Mr. McLean: I appreciate your comments, but it just so happens that we have a daughter who has about six or seven friends and when they get together at our home, they talk about what is taking place and what is going on in the classroom. I can tell you it is widespread.

I am saying there is a problem within the system, within the teaching profession; you have to get to those students. I also say that the parents are responsible to a great extent, but we must not forget that for the parents, it is not like it used to be. Both parents are working and there are single mothers. It is difficult and widespread.

Mrs. Hall: I agree with you and recognize the need in our own system for an improved teacher evaluation process that we have put into effect over the last two years. We believe it will highlight problems in situations where teachers just are not reaching students. We recognize that and are working on it. I can speak for my own board in that respect.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. McLean.

Mrs. Gardiner: I am sorry, Madam Chairman, could I just respond briefly to that? I think if Mr. McLean refers to recommendation 2 under the OSIS section on page 9, he will see that OPSTA and NOSTA are recommending that the Ministry of Education examine the possibility of a differentiated system of required credits.

Now you may have wondered what on earth that means. What it means is exactly what you are talking about, that there should be, instead of 16 required credits for all, a differentiated system of required credits, a larger range of choice for the student who perhaps may not have an inclination to take grade 9 French, but who may in fact prefer to take another technological or business subject as an alternative.

We would not want to say that the ministry should bring in a system that would damage the delivery of a basic, high-quality core curriculum for all, but at the same time, we do think there should be some different system for the required credits.

Mr. Reycraft: Thank you to NOSTA and OPSTA for the brief.

In the section on semestering, you make the statement that teachers are unable to cover as much content in math and science courses as they do in the nonsemestered system. Are there any research data available to support that statement?

Mrs. Hall: Perhaps I can answer that. I was making inquiry from our own administration on this whole position, and basically our superintendent of administration was telling me there are research data on that. I do not know exactly what they are. Certainly we could obtain them for you if you wish to have them.

Mr. Reycraft: I would certainly appreciate receiving them if they are available. I have heard the same statement from a lot of teachers and principals as recently as Friday morning, when I was in one of my secondary schools, but I am not aware of any research that has been done to substantiate it.

Mrs. Hall: I believe there is, and perhaps our staff from OPSTA will get that for you.

Mr. Jackson: There is some from western Canada.

Mr. Reycraft: Okay. In the first section of the brief, you talked about a differentiated system of credits for a high school diploma, something that others have suggested to us. I have not yet been able to really grasp how something like that would work, though. Are you talking about two different kinds of diplomas? How would it actually work? I assume what you are saying is that those students who are not university bound should be able to obtain a diploma without having to get the 30 credits that those who are university bound are required to get.

Mrs. Gardiner: I guess the problem is twofold. The situation presently is that each high school graduate gets the same diploma, regardless of the level of difficulty of the subjects, regardless of the area of speciality and the electives that the student has chosen. So we have a situation where a person may have taken 30 credits at an advanced level of difficulty and concentrated on academic subjects, and that student has the same diploma as a student who has taken 30 credits at a basic level of difficulty with an emphasis on vocational, technical or business subjects.

The difficulty lies in the public expectation that both of these individuals will perform at the same level. OSIS tried to address this concern by instituting a more easily understood student transcript so that prospective employers could, for example, take a look at the transcript and readily ascertain the level of achievement of the student, but in fact, in practice, this is not working very effectively.

As well as that, the problem arises, too, with entrance to post-secondary education institutions, where we have students who are graduates of our secondary system and who, because they are graduates of the secondary system, assume that means entrance to a post-secondary system. In fact, that is not necessarily the case. Colleges and universities set their own entrance requirements, which may differ dramatically from the graduation requirements from secondary school, so we have a difficulty here.

We are not suggesting how it should be solved, but we think that is something this committee could figure out and the Ministry of Education could act on.

Mr. Reycraft: As you have already pointed out, it is not a new problem. We had the same problem when we had the secondary school graduation diploma and the secondary school graduation honours diploma. Generally, employers found it difficult to understand the difference between the two. As you also have rightly pointed out, OSIS tried to address that problem. I thought maybe you were suggesting a solution to us and I was not grasping it.

George Radwanski has charged that, because of the higher dropout rates in general-level courses, and especially in basic-level courses, the streaming system that we have contributes to the dropout rate. You have said in your brief that to destream the system would contribute to the dropout rate.

1550

I am pleased to see the statement. If you have been following the committee, I am sure you are aware of the fact that I have great concerns about destreaming the system. Would you like to comment on the Radwanski charge?

Mrs. Wright: I would like to comment and then ask Mrs. Hall to comment as well. I went to school in the 1950s. I am sure there are others in this room who went in the 1950s as well for grades 9 and 10.

Mr. Jackson: As a student or as a teacher?

Mrs. Wright: As a very young student.

Mr. Mahoney: It would have been the late 1950s.

Mrs. Wright: Perhaps for some of us. Because some of you may not know, I will refresh your memories. In the early 1950s the dropout rate was around 60 per cent. The reason for that has a lot to do with the economic times. As well, when you went into high school, there was not any streaming. You took so many courses and you had an option or two that you could tack on to your year.

When you started off in grade 9, you maybe would have had as many as eight grade 9 classes. When you got to grade 11 there were maybe five. In grade 12 there were maybe three, and in grade 13, one. That was what you ended up with in high school simply because there were a number of students who could not hack the necessary chemistry and Latin courses that were obligatory at the time.

What we have done since then is that we have come an extremely long way. We have cut the dropout rate in half. As Mr. Radwanski says, it is 30 per cent. Thirty per cent is half of what it was in the 1950s. We feel that he is advocating a 1950s program.

All children do not learn the same way. Mr. McLean spoke of that question earlier this afternoon when he said that a young student was not doing very well in a particular course and was very frustrated over it. It seems to me that there are children who are capable and wanting to go on to a university education. Therefore, we expect the educators to give advice on the courses that are necessary. But there are many students who want to be in the technical trades. Therefore, there are courses that the academic advisers should also recommend for these people. They are not necessarily one and the same.

We really have to realize that all children are indeed different and learn differently. It is our job and, in fact, it is our responsibility to meet the needs of those individual students. Making it mandatory for all children to learn the same thing is indeed a backward step. It is not going to be productive for the future of this province in education.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: That is assuming that the streaming occurs only on the basis of academic ability and that there are no other factors.

Mrs. Wright: That is right.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Which is not necessarily the case.

Mrs. Wright: It may not be the case in all areas. Again, I think we have to look to the whole province and not just necessarily to large growth areas.

Mrs. Hall: I would like to address the basic-level concept of students taking their credits at the basic level. I have heard from a number of our principals. As perhaps you know, we did have three basic-level schools in Etobicoke and we have now amalgamated them all into one.

A basic-level school was in my ward. I went there often to see what was happening with the students. What the principal there was telling me is that often his success stories are not those students who have stayed through and obtained their grade 12 secondary diploma but those students who have gained skills within that school in various areas and gone out and found themselves productive positions within society.

That was the perception of that principal. Basically, we were training them to go directly into the workforce at the basic level. They were going out and getting themselves jobs in the areas in which they had been trained. This was perceived as very positive by the principal, instead of just staying in school for the sake of staying in school.

Mr. Reycraft: But those people became statistical dropouts.

Mrs. Hall: They became statistical dropouts, but they were being perceived in the school by the students, the principal and staff as the success stories.

Mr. Jackson: I would like to thank OPSTA and NOSTA for their brief. It was quite interesting. I appreciated the way you clearly articulated your recommendations. They are very helpful to us.

Semestering is an area in which I have been particularly interested both as a former trustee and now as a legislator. I am intrigued by the notion that we have allowed semestering to evolve in this province without clearly defined educational reasons for it. At the outset I want to commend OPSTA because it has taken a leadership role in raising questions on it. That is abundantly clear, and we are receiving more information each week about the concerns you have raised.

I would like to press you a little further on this issue for the purposes of the record. Could one of you comment about the fact that many trustees and teachers have indicated to us that they feel it should be a local decision on a matter of such importance?

Second, why do we not have a series of protocols in place much in the manner in which we close a school–I consider it just as radical surgery to a school organization, to change it fundamentally from nonsemestered to a semestered school–and why is there no protocol in place provincially mandating parent involvement and community input on such a fundamental decision? Could you comment on those two areas?

Mrs. Wright: I will start, then ask Bob to comment. I believe most boards do have a policy of some sort in place for semestering. I will just tell you about my board, which is Grey county.

We have five secondary schools, two of which are semestered. We did have three semestered schools; one went back to a traditional school this past year. When the fourth school was thinking about semestering–and it is a school decision–it had to put into place a task force to look at the pros and cons of semestering. The parents were the ones who swung the pendulum the other way. They did not favour semestering, basically for the technical programs: the music program, which suffered, and the other technical programs. I think there are policies in place, but I do not think it is a policy mandated by the government.

Mr. Whitehead: I would like to expand a little on some of the difficulties experienced by smaller boards in the northern region and in other parts of Ontario, I suppose. The area in which I am located is the North Shore Board of Education, which is halfway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. The two major communities there are Elliot Lake and Blind River.

We have one school in Blind River that is split into a French high school and an English public high school. In Elliot Lake we have an English public high school with about 1,000 students and a French high school. We do not have an awful lot of flexibility when it comes to semestering and nonsemestering; we have to go either one way or the other. This tends to be a problem with smaller school boards. I do not know if that is answering either of your questions, but it was something I wanted to speak to, anyway.

Mr. Jackson: For one who sat through all of Bill 30 and then the francophone hearings in my four years here, and having visited both schools you have mentioned previously in my incarnation as a trustee, I have some sensitivity to it. However, I guess, as in all matters of school organization, if we can find a solid, academically sound reason for why we do something, then funding, we hope, in theory will therefore flow to it.

What is disturbing me the more I delve into semestering is that we are not coming up with a sound academic reason supported by research to defend it, and therefore we wander on the subject. Boards are wandering. Arlene, I would have to say I have asked this question of every trustee or trustee group that has presented in the six weeks we have been doing this. There are so few boards that have any type of protocol in place, let alone a policy that is written. I am greatly disturbed at how casual we are on this whole subject.

1600

The Essex board should be given a medal for the work it has done in terms of a research paper that came to us. I know the Carleton board has really stopped and said: "Hey, we're going hell bent for leather down the road. We're going to stop here and take stock of what we're doing." There are some examples but, on average, this has been left to a principal and his staff and, bang, bang, it was changed around. Then pretty soon they woke up and they realized we had a whole system of semestered schools.

Bob, I agree with you that you have specific scheduling problems. Again, Mr. McLean's question had to do with the student who was struggling in a class, but it also had a lot to do with a student who did not like the class because it was his fifth choice but was the only one he could get into. That is another element of it that we did not get into, but that is also a function, Bob, that your students have to face.

My concern is that if we can defend it academically and therefore can establish it as at least a benchmark for a level of service required, just as we can qualify the number of hours of English required, we can therefore organize our schools and fund them as well. With the complex set of grants we have, it is possible to adjust those for purposes of effective secondary organization.

I guess my final question, in the interests of time, would be: How far is OPSTA prepared to go, first, in doing a survey on the point I raised of what the protocols are in the boards to develop a consensus within your organization to aid this committee if it were to make recommendations to the minister with respect to studying semestering specifically?

Mrs. Wright: Would there be any money available for us to undertake that study? I think we would probably be pleased to do so.

Mr. Jackson: I am not asking you to do the study to which you refer in your recommendation. I am talking about an informal survey of the boards. We have gross figures. Incidentally, I

also wanted to compliment you for setting the record straight on the numbers. We have seen some figures that almost misrepresent the actual picture; yours, in the detail in which you have presented them, are a lot more accurate. The implications were that half of Ontario schools were semestered and half were nonsemestered. That is not correct, and your paragraph clarifies that.

I believe this committee may end up recommending that a significant study be undertaken. I do not feel that is far enough. I feel we should almost be having a moratorium on the movement from traditional organizations to semestered. I think if we could get the trustees' organizations to assist us in doing a quick survey of where we are in terms of the direction they are going–I come from a jurisdiction where there were efforts to change our last remaining secondary school to a semestered school. We have no protocols in place. We have no policy in place. We heard the deputants prior to you, the York region board. They could identify a policy, but it is not in policy form. Those things have a habit of changing. Really, I am trying to get more support from the trustee organization, which has shown leadership on the issue. That is perhaps why I am dwelling on this point while I have you in front of us.

Mrs. Wright: I do not see that as being a very big problem for us. It is a matter of surveying our boards to find out what is in place. I guess because I come from a board that does have a set policy– In fact, we even had one school go back to the traditional school as of this September. They had been semestered for four years, and they have done a reversal on that. We could probably get some information on that as well. Yes, we will do that for you and get it to the committee.

Mr. Jackson: Not to put too fine a point on it, we are hearing that in western Canada boards of education are shifting in a fairly organized way. They are shifting back to the nonsemestered approach. They are doing it for sound pedagogical reasons and they are doing it, having experimented with overdosing on semestering.

It strikes me that we would be doing a disservice to allow what we are finding through our interviews as still a lot of support out there for moving to semestering. There are, I dare say, a couple of dozen schools that are now in the process of changing over or considering changing over. It just strikes me that if we are going to move back again for sound academic reasons as part of an overall provincial strategy, then we should be communicating that to those boards and telling them to slow down.

I am talking to boards that did not even know we were examining the issue of semestering, and they are saying, "We have to go on to semestering because we are losing too many students in grade 13 who are taking a bus and going down the road to another school." That is absolutely the worst reason to become a semestered school, because you are losing some of your grade 13 enrolment and you do not want to lose some of your teachers and put some of your programs in jeopardy, but people are doing it and we are being told it was for that reason.

Somehow we, as a government, have to communicate that we are going to (a) find an academic reason why we are going to organize our schools that way, (b) get that signal out there very quickly so that boards can say, "We will stop and pause and get some direction and some assistance," and, of course, (c) communicate with the public.

Mrs. Hall: I think it is very important that it be communicated to the public because often the pressure comes from the perception of parents that this is the best thing and, of course, from students, and it is that pressure that causes schools to turn to semester. We had that particular example happen this year for one of our traditional secondary schools and we did go to the community. We have a policy, not necessarily specific as to whether we go to semestering or not, but of going to the community on major issues like school closings and semestering.

It was the community in that particular area that was in favour of the semestering. Personally, I do not value it very greatly. I have my own children in a traditional school, and they travel in order to get there. But that is my particular belief based on the knowledge that I have.

Parents in general do not have the knowledge that we have, so if it is a provincial guideline and it is put out there to the community at large that this is important and for these reasons, perhaps parents and students will buy into it, but that has to be there as well. We cannot just arbitrarily say, "No semestering."

Mr. Jackson: No, but a provincial government can.

Mrs. Hall: Yes, that is true.

Mr. Jackson: I also sense that the trustees would be less reluctant to say that that is an intrusion, that they are not robbing you of your local autonomy, if we can say for sound pedagogical reasons, "We feel that we better

look at how we organize our high schools and its effect on English." We know there is evidence to show that we should be clustering semestered schools by some of the subject areas–which you addressed as a recommendation, and I deeply appreciate it–in grades 9 and 10 at least, where in language, math and some of the arts and some of the business programs, there is clear evidence that the forward progress of the students is enhanced by continuity.

When those are the very skills that the public and the private sector and George Radwanski are all screaming about, saying that we are falling down upon, it strikes me, why are we organizing a school whose specific objective mitigates the very problem we are here attempting to address? I do not want to try to make it sound like this is overly important. I just think, why are we structuring a school to set you behind right from the opening gun?

I am sorry for dwelling on it, Madam Chairman, but it is something I feel very strongly about, and I am pleased that the OPSTA is as committed as it is to ensuring that this issue be put more in an academic context of how it is affecting students and their development in this province. For that I want to thank you.

Mrs. Wright: Just to carry on, the second of our recommendations on semestering is tied in with this, because we would like the committee to look at the possibilities of increasing the instructional time, the length of the school year, etc., so all these things are tied in together. Mr. Jackson, I am sure if we can provide you with some of the information, it might assist in the decision-making.

1610

Madam Chairman: We only have a few minutes left and we have both Mr. Mahoney and Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. Mahoney: I will be brief.

Mr. McLean: Thank you.

Mr. Mahoney: I was not going to be but it is a necessity after that.

I must tell you I was interested in the comment that the kids do a good selling job on semestering, because they sure do. I have three teenage boys and, as a result of that, I have a lot of kids around my home and they are all extremely positive on semestering, which tells me that maybe we had better have a look at it. If they are having that much fun at it, it cannot be right.

Mr. Cooke raised an issue which really did not come out on the streaming issue. The opponents of streaming or the proponents of destreaming–the people who criticize it are talking about streaming occurring as a result of ethnicity, as a result of socioeconomic status, as opposed to academic qualifications. I would like you to comment on that but I would also like you to comment on the suggestion that has been made by many people, at least one group earlier today, that streaming not take place until at least one year of high school and perhaps two are under the belt, so to speak. Would you comment on those two aspects?

Mrs. Gardiner: I will comment on the latter first, whether delayed streaming takes place. We have taken the position by looking at it and discussing it among ourselves, asking for input from other boards when we are making these decisions as to how we will approach this, that basically we feel we would just be delaying the inevitable to go beyond, to have unstreamed grades 9 and 10, because we look at the fact that in many of our boards there actually is the opportunity for transition from one level to another.

Students begin making choices and there is a building process for many subject areas, math, sciences and so on, so that if you are taking a subject at the advanced level, you are building to the next level. If you were to take that at the general, it is a little more difficult to move to the advanced for the following year.

We have transition in place. In some systems it is done after an educational assessment and/or after initial exams take place. If students select, say, a general-level course and they work at that and take their first exam–I know in my own board the approximate figure is 70 per cent–then actually the teacher begins to look at that to see whether they should be going on to the advanced level or should be working at the advanced level. There is flexibility even at that percentage point dependent upon individual ability and the desire of the student.

What we do is consult with the guidance counsellors, the teachers, the parents and the student if there is going to be any move made. They generally change streams before year-end because often if that occurs, if they have the ability, they do not have to repeat that whole year's credit and they are able to move on up. This is easier perhaps in a quadmestered system but it is possible in a semestered system and also in the traditional. Again, it depends on the individual.

We also provide for transition through repeating that particular course. The daughter of a friend of mine took grade 10 French and received

99 per cent on it. Part of the way through the year the teacher said: "You should not be here. You should not be taking this," but the parent insisted. The following semester, or the following year, I am not sure which, the child actually took it at the grade 10 advanced level and is now planning on going through and teaching and majoring in French so that she can teach French immersion or core French.

We have summer day school where students can operate, if they so desire, to move up to a different level and we have summer and fall night programs that they can take advantage of. In our particular system, we have one quadmestered school and this is an experiment, where basically there are four periods to respond in the school to a shift in stream. The credits are quarter credits. I am not sure how it is going to turn out, whether it is academically sound. Again, it is a pilot project. It came about as a basis of numbers.

We have to be realistic in declining boards or very small boards where we only have a few students to deal with. We have finite dollars in which to educate them. If our pupil-teacher ratio could be whatever we wanted it to be, that would not be a problem; but we are faced with the realities there.

Mr. Mahoney: Before you go on, I think you made the comment earlier that "we"–"we" being you, not me–know a lot more about this subject than parents do. It seems to me that part of the problem in streaming is exactly the fact that for the parent, particularly of the first child to enter secondary school, it is a very mysterious time; and the secondary schools, frankly, can be intimidating to a lot of parents who perhaps did not go that far in school themselves and are somewhat mystified by the whole process.

Allowing students to mature a little bit more–making that decision when they are 12 or 13 years old in grade 8 seems to me to be a pretty monumental decision for the first-time parent. While I accept the fact that there are bridges in place, I note from my own personal experience that those bridges are not easily crossed. In fact, in my own experience, there were great attempts to prevent the crossing from taking place. It was only because of, as I have said before, my wife's belligerence that we wound up going across that bridge, and the student is doing quite well. I do not think it is as easy perhaps as you are intimating.

Mrs. Hall: What I am discovering is that, as much as I feel that it is very difficult for boards to be constantly addressing the issues that are coming forth at all times, we are being hit almost on a monthly basis with a different issue to address–

Mr. Mahoney: We understand that part.

Mrs. Hall: –and one of the benefits is that it heightens our awareness of the need to be conscious of these various things; that is, that teachers should not be taking the approach that, just because a student is from a certain ethnic background, they make the assumption that that student should not be in a certain level.

We certainly got many of our boards involved in race and ethnic relations policies. That too heightens awareness and the need to really look at the students themselves, at the individuals, and leave all these other things aside.

I think boards are becoming more responsible in that respect, and that it is not something that is strongly resisted as much as it may have been in the past; if you made a decision, that is your bed and you lie on it sort of thing. I think that staff and parents are becoming more knowledgeable, even ethnic parents, because they have their groups out there that speak for them as well. They become more knowledgeable of the fact that they can speak up and say what they are feeling, and so on.

I just think there is more willingness to be flexible on the part of boards now because awareness has been heightened more drastically than was so in the past. We have to realize that we are moving on. We are not where we were 10 years ago.

Mr. Mahoney: Yes. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Gardiner: Could I just comment on that because I am very pleased that you caught Mr. Cooke's comments, and so did I. Just for the record, I am sorry he is not here to hear the response.

Mr. McLean: Speak loudly. He will hear you.

Mrs. Gardiner: I think that a major concern of people who are critical of the whole concept of streaming is that students are fixed into a stream and their futures are predetermined on the basis of socioeconomic status or some other sort of economic variable. I think that conclusion is probably drawn from data that have some merit, but I think that the conclusion is perhaps misguided. The statistics certainly show that there is a correlation between earning levels of parents and learning levels of students. That correlation is certainly substantiated by statistics, but I think that that points, probably more clearly, to the influence of the family rather than

to the shortcomings of the school system on the achievement of students.

I think probably as well that if you have a heterogeneous grouping of students in a particular attendance area, the whole process of streaming is not quite so difficult a problem, but in small rural boards such as Lennox and Addington and Victoria and many others, where we do not have the luxury of being able to put everybody together and expect everything of everybody, where we have to give some direction that is based on the expectations of the students, the hopes and aspirations of their parents and the abilities of the students and their backgrounds, I think it is important to note that something that we have to do is to provide appropriate education for everyone.

1620

Regarding the consulting process that schools go into before a child is directed to a particular stream, studies have shown that the recommendation of the student's grade 8 teacher is the best predictor of that student's future academic success. I think that most boards certainly take the prediction or the recommendation of the grade 8 teacher under advisement when making the recommendation for the stream that the student should choose.

Mr. Mahoney: I can disprove that by saying I was voted most likely to succeed in grade 8.

Madam Chairman: And look where you ended up today.

Mr. Mahoney: There you go. Thank you very much. Those were good comments.

Madam Chairman: We have long run out of our time. Our next presenters are ready, but I know Mrs. O'Neill had a final, very brief question.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am glad to see you are here today, Mrs. Wright. I want to congratulate you in person on your new responsibilities. I see you are putting forward at least two thirds of the opinions today.

I want to ask you a couple of things. I am sure you are aware that the technological studies review referred to a need for examining OSIS. You are aware of that technological review?

Mrs. Wright: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you having input into that?

Mrs. Wright: I expect so. Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think that would be very valuable.

I also want to ask you a very specific question about the increase in instructional time you mention on page 10. Several people have come to us and asked to examine, for instance, the mandatory hours for the credits of 110. What are you speaking to there?

Mrs. Gardiner: Perhaps I could address that. In regard to the recommendation "That the Ministry of Education, in consultation with school boards, should examine the possibility of an increase in instructional time, the length of the school year and the school-year organization," that recommendation is made in a context of looking at semestering, at the possible alternatives and the issues arising as a result of the increased tendency to semester schools. The possibility of an increase in instructional time is simply a suggestion. It is something that the ministry could examine at the same time.

Mrs. O'Neill: You are not talking about the hours of credit?

Mrs. Gardiner: The hours that are required for credits? No. It is total school time during the day or the total instructional time over the school year.

Mrs. O'Neill: On folio 9, your second point in regard to OSIS, which several of us have zeroed in on, you have I thought–it is hard to know as I was not here at the writing of this–but you seem to have a relatively good feeling about OSIS and say, "Let's see the whole thing continue and let's get the most out of that document."

I have difficulty, then, understanding your second point because we have there a differentiated system of required credits and because we do have the OACs being either inside or outside the secondary graduation diploma. We have a certificate of education. We have the exemptions from compulsories. We have substitutions. I am asking you, what more do you want? I admit, and it has been brought to us by many people, that we are not using that document to its fullest.

Mrs. Gardiner: Yes. I guess that certainly is the problem. The document has not been in use for long enough for people to become completely familiar with all the options available within it. It is difficult for many school boards, with limited enrolments in many of their schools, to offer the wide range of options that perhaps are available under OSIS. So they are forced in fact to offer to grade 9 students perhaps two options and to grade 10 students two electives. We do get almost the abolition of streaming within grades 9 and 10. The elective courses are the problem.

Where a student who is taking the majority of credits in a basic level is required to take French, the course has to be offered either to some or to

all of them. School principals feel that to start to exempt some students means that all students will want to be exempted and that this goes against the basic philosophy of OSIS. Certainly, with the French curriculum, which requires a certain number of hours of French, that number of hours is achieved at the end of grade 9.

There are implications to this whole system of required credits. The diploma, as you note, does not reflect the differentiation of the credits achieved.

Mrs. O'Neill: I realize that, but there are still quite a few areas in which those credits coming together can be brought together in a different manner to the person who sits beside you in the class. Maybe you are saying that principals need more encouragement to explore some of those things. I think some of them would be even more useful and more necessary in a small school. I suppose that is the kind of thing you as trustees can take some leadership in. It has really been parents and trustees who have brought those alternatives in the document to our minds. It was not the educators.

Mrs. Gardiner: Yes, you are quite right.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank both OPSTA and NOSTA for their presentation today and wish them much joy and success with their merger.

Mrs. Wright: Thank you for the opportunity of appearing.

Madam Chairman: Our final presentation today is from the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association. Please come forward. Perhaps rather than saying welcome to our committee, I should say welcome back to our committee. We apologize for the late start. We have had quite a stimulating afternoon and, as usual, too many questions for our time allotment. Please begin whenever you are ready and introduce yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO CATHOLIC SUPERVISORY OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Miss Lynn: We are very pleased that we have this opportunity once again to present the understandings and observations of the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association.

I would like, first, to introduce members of the executive committee who have joined me today in presenting our thinking to the select committee on education. To my immediate right is Peter Ferren, vice-president of the association. On my left, you know Tom Reilly, executive director of OCSOA. My name is Barbara Lynn.

It would be our hope this afternoon, following the brief sent to you prior to our coming today, that we could spend some time highlighting and underlining what we think are key points in the brief before you on the four topics on your agenda for today.

1630

If I may, I would like to begin on page 3. That is some background to our understanding and some of our thinking which helped us organize how we would prepare to respond to the four topics of streaming, OSIS, semestering and grade promotion.

We believe the topics on the agenda today are topics relating to the organization of education and that they reflect the purposes of providing a universal, free education. Underlying our thinking in the preparation, we feel that in our society today there seems to be little consensus on the overall purpose of education. Indeed, we believe there has been a shift in emphasis over the years from school as a singularly academic institution to school as a place where all-round, healthy development, social and personal adjustment should be fostered and enhanced.

The consequences of this shift in emphasis are that all students, whatever their ability or handicap, are welcomed into the same structure; that success currently is measured by more than academic progress, and that services pertaining to health and welfare are offered in addition to educational services. In other words, education in this province has become much more broadly conceived than it once was.

We believe the mandate of the elementary school seems to be unanimously accepted as one of addressing the needs of the whole child. Academic, emotional, social, spiritual, physical and aesthetic aspects of development are given equal emphasis.

At the secondary level, however, expectations are much less clear, or perhaps we should say much more complex, because there is a variety of purposes perceived by some as deserving greater or less emphasis at any given point in time. The secondary school is expected to continue the nurturing role of the elementary grades and it is expected to set standards, to impart clearly defined basic knowledge and skills, to prepare students for the workforce and generally to produce results by making students measure up to adult expectations.

It is this complexity which we believe has promoted almost constant reorganization of the

secondary school in each decade over the past 35 to 40 years. We can identify what we think is a key emphasis in each of the 10-year periods, from the 1950s until the present. It would seem that because of our concern about economic status, in the 1980s we have an apparent emphasis on skill development and preparation for work.

We should like to emphasize that we see these changes as organizational changes. They did not and do not necessarily affect what was actually taught in the classroom or affect the daily experience of students. Most sincerely we wish to underline that we feel it is the quality of that daily experience and its appropriateness to the needs of each student that will motivate students to learn and to remain learners.

While we hope to present observations and recommendations on the organization issues on today's agenda–and we trust these will be seen as a balanced view rather than an extreme perspective–we urge the select committee to address the need for a greater clarity of purpose and expectation in the definition of what schools can and should accomplish and a renewed emphasis on program development, implementation and staff development.

At this time, I would ask Peter Ferren to address and highlight some of the main points in the body of the brief.

Mr. Ferren: I have listened to you discuss streaming for the last little while. You are probably getting a little tired of hearing about it, but I want to make the point which we have made in the brief that streaming and grouping are two entirely different concepts.

Grouping is an instructional strategy that may be used in one or more classrooms and it is a strategy that needs to be further developed and refined. I think the danger that exists with grouping is that when they become locked into that as an instructional strategy, students become locked into that stream over a long period of time.

Our curriculum documents at the elementary and secondary–I am referring to P1J1–and education in the primary and junior division, as well as OSIS, emphasize the need for our programs in our schools, both at elementary and secondary, to address the individual needs of students and the grouping and streaming really arise out of the efforts of educators and organizations to meet those needs.

The streaming pattern may be used within individual classrooms, individual schools or by differentiated schools across the system, as you will find in some systems where there may be at the secondary level a school for the arts, a school for academic programs, a school for technological programs–some of them referred to as low-tech and hi-tech–as well as vocational schools. There are a variety of patterns across the province.

What actually happens when you try to stream is that you are trying to group the abilities of students along a similar line and you are trying to instruct them appropriately so that their educational objectives may be achieved in line with their abilities. The problem is that no two individuals are the same. You really do not end up with homogeneous groupings, regardless of what you try to do or what strategy you try to use. In fact, you end up with the opposite in terms of meeting the needs of the individuals because you are locking them into a particular type of program and it usually is very difficult for them to exit from that program with any meaningful achievement or any meaningful career goal. In many cases, as we know, they exit themselves from the programs.

Our position–the separate school position on streaming, as we point out in the brief–is that, with as few exceptions as possible, students should be educated in heterogeneously composed neighbourhood schools free of streaming. You are not going to eliminate it entirely, but I think that is the goal.

The neighbourhood school as the basic unit of educational service should be a comprehensive school which reflects the community it serves with the full range of skills, talents, ethnic heritage and social and economic status represented. Students should be free of the sense of social isolation which segregation by ability, talent or interest tends to engender.

Our fundamental belief is that a school can operate successfully only if it adopts its administrative and curriculum arrangements to suit the needs of its pupils, rather than expecting the students to accommodate themselves to the system's preconceptions. All of this implies a flexibility of program, a sophistication in the analysis of student needs and an advocacy of each student's case which have not been achieved by educators.

We reject any proposal which recommends that students be assigned to specific schools or streams on the basis of their perceived or demonstrated ability at the elementary or secondary level. We emphasize the need for a case manager or student advocate in order to assist that individual to achieve his educational goals as

he proceeds through the elementary and secondary school.

Turning to OSIS, we are making the case here, as others have made to you, that we do not want to see this document and the programs therein turfed out. We do not want to see the system again turned upside down. As you have already been advised, there has been a lot of time, a tremendous amount of public input and professional, parental and student input into the development of that document over a number of years and basically we think it is sound.

1640

We draw attention to some of the strengths in the document, particularly with reference to guidance services and resource-based learning. I do not think we have had enough time to address in a very meaningful way those two particular areas. I think we are just in the beginning of expanding the role of guidance services with such things as career information centres. That will be really a resource and a supplement or a component of the overall guidance services program in the secondary school. Certainly, we have not had time to address in a meaningful way resource-based learning. That takes time. You are dealing with people issues, staff development, and it is one of the things that we plead for in our recommendations.

On the area of co-operative education, life skills programs and the arts, we think these are very positive initiatives that are advocated in OSIS and we would like to see them retained and more resources provided in order to ensure that they will be implemented in a meaningful way to the advantage of our students.

Among some of the issues and concerns that we raise for our Catholic school system, one is the limitations on the development of courses for credit in religion. As you are aware, they are restricted to the intermediate level. We have two credits and we would like to see four credits in religion at the grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 OAC levels.

With respect to the rigidity and timing of what in practice amounts to streaming, really, what we are talking about here is that, as others have mentioned to you, the grade 8 level is too early a time in a young person's educational program to make a career decision. We are asking for that to be delayed even to the end of grade 10.

There is a lack of staff development for coping with multigrade and bilevel classes. Curriculum overload, I guess, always has been with us and probably always will be with us, but it is one of the concerns of the professional staffs in each of the boards across the province.

On the lack of resources for effective implementation of curriculum, we are beginning to address that, but for so many years we have spent so much time and so many resources in the development phase, we seem to think that once that development phase is over, the implementation phase will automatically result. We forget that implementation is a process; it is not an event. It is important that sufficient resources be provided to implement those programs in a meaningful way, and time and interaction of staff are required in order to do an effective job in that particular area.

As to changes that may be required, again, we feel that OSIS is not a fundamentally flawed organizational plan, although we recognize that it can be improved. At the moment, energies and resources are required in the areas of program development, planning and counselling for individual students and staff development. These areas, we believe, can be tackled under a modified OSIS without a major overhaul.

We draw attention in the brief to the basics. There has been so much public writing and public discussion on the basics that I think it is time we should address that issue and ask, "What are the basics?" Everyone who writes about it or speaks about it seems to be an expert in that area. I think there are really different kinds of basics when you look at the students or when you look at it from the students' point of view. I think it is an area that needs some consideration.

The Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association would advocate a very general program in grades 9 and 10 based on the delineated basics, with specialization to occur beginning in the senior division at the grade 11 level. Even greater emphasis should be placed on the school-workplace connection. Co-operative education is a highly successful program, but more such experiences and opportunities are required.

In summary, the educational system does not need a total reorganization. It needs resources and time to implement and digest the good ideas which have already been laid upon it.

Turning to semestering just for a moment, we believe semestering should not be dealt with outside the context of the total structure of the school year. There appears to be sufficient cause at this time to examine carefully a reshaping of the school year with a view to providing greater flexibility and opportunity for students entering, leaving and switching programs and courses. We believe it is time this was given serious study.

If change were to be found advantageous, we believe that modifications to the school year should include the following considerations: that elementary and secondary school calendars should coincide, for example, using the same starting and closing dates, the same length of the year and breaks, etc.; there should be at least two, and preferably more, entry and re-entry dates for students, and there should be an opportunity to co-ordinate secondary school, college and university access dates. All changes must have their rationale centred on the advantages to the students. I would ask Tom Reilly to address grade promotion and the recommendations.

Mr. Reilly: Basically, in terms of grade promotion, our feeling is that the credit system has abolished that concept at the secondary level and that is good. Really, we are dwelling in the past in terms of the concepts we use for a grade when we talk about elementary school. We have the concept that all students must advance at the same time after one year and they must stick together as cohorts–and that is manifestly not true, because students tend to be treated individually in elementary schools in Ontario–or that we can somehow take knowledge and break it down into segments which happen to be 10 months long, which is ridiculous. That concept of breaking knowledge down into these periods of time which you master and move on is also absurd. We would suggest that any talk around the grade concept be in terms of trying to obliterate it from the vocabulary.

My main task is to conclude and I shall try to do so briefly. What we are saying is that educational practice in Ontario is basically well-founded. If additional resources can be found–and that is not just money; even more important than money are resources of energy and time, because you do not get those back again–they should go into staff development, development of programs and teaching materials, and advocacy for students: things that affect the daily experience of students. If they have a good experience, they will stay in school.

We would also ask the committee to propagate, if it can, the virtue of patience because all of these things require patience over a period of time to put them in place. It seems to me, if I may make an analogy, that we look around the house of education at times and we do not like the wallpaper, so we tear down the house. That is kind of a radical approach. If I could throw in what Oscar Wilde said on his deathbed, he looked around and said, "Either this wallpaper goes or I go," and we know who went. That is the danger, because we could destroy the system instead of just repairing it.

Our recommendations are on page 11, and I will break them into groups: The first two deal with benchmarks and evaluation. We think those can be put in place and used well to the benefit of students. Recommendations 3 to 7 talk about the people and the programs and how to enhance those. Recommendations 8 and 9 talk about flexibility in the system and making the system inviting to students, giving them opportunities to be there, to stay there, to come back, to break their learning down into segments that suit them rather than suit us. Recommendations 10 and 11 address themselves to marketing. For too long in education, marketing has been a hard sell. We sell what we see as good, and what we are advocating rather is that we go out and meet the market and listen to the needs of students and parents and try to meet those.

1650

Miss Lynn: Thank you very much for this opportunity to present our ideas.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We have several members who have indicated they have questions.

Mr. Mahoney: First, I want to thank you for some of these comments, particularly on OSIS. Many of the groups that have been before us have made a similar statement in that OSIS has not been around long enough, we are just now seeing the first set of graduates coming out and we do not need to do a major overhaul but some slight tinkering perhaps might be in order. You have, I think very appropriately, suggested some of the areas that could be tinkered with. I appreciate that. That will be helpful to us.

You started out saying that you were opposed to streaming and I was going to ask a question and then you went on to say that you in fact support it as long as it is done at grade 10. Am I interpreting that correctly, that you support the concept of streaming but at a later date?

Mr. Ferren: I will explain that. I guess what I am getting at is the fact that if at grades 9 and 10 we are running exploratory programs and delaying career decision-making by the student until the beginning of the senior division, you may end up with what looks like streaming but is a self-selection as far as the student is concerned. The student has chosen a career and the student may in fact select a program that may be exactly identical, say, to a vocational program or to a particular technological program. But it is the

pupil choosing that program. It may be streaming by self-selection but it is not streaming by us selecting.

Mr. Mahoney: On the issue of promotion, Tom, you suggested we eliminate grade promotion totally from our vocabulary. I did not hear you advocate social promotion or subject promotion. If it is subject promotion, which I assume you would be more in favour of, what do we do in a case where a student has not grasped a particular credit? Do they repeat that entire subject to get the credit? Do they go on even though they did not grasp it? How do we deal with that?

Mr. Reilly: As long as we assume the structure we have now, we have a tremendous difficulty with that kind of thing. I would not assume the structure we have now. I would think that if the school year were differently organized, students could be doing units that would fill in gaps in their knowledge and take them on. The jump would not be a year's jump. We are assuming a year's jump or a semester jump at the moment. You either do it all again or you kind of do not go on.

A key to that, I think, is this concept of the student advocate. Right now in schools we know a lot about students. Parents know a lot about the same children at home and there is a real gap in communication. No one, unless there is a difficulty, sits down to try to pool that knowledge and talk through where this student is heading and what would be good for the student and the kinds of experiences. We would see as part of the same package that the communication is ongoing. The student may well be choosing or be guided into units of study particularly suited to that student. There are physical limits in getting to the extreme where everybody has a tailored program, but it could be a lot more flexible than it is right now.

Mr. Mahoney: But if you adopt your first recommendation, which I think in some areas the ministry is already doing, where you establish clear expectations and benchmarks, the key phrase there being benchmarks, presumably you are in a sense measuring the success or the attainment of skill and/or knowledge that particular student has. If you do that measuring and you determine that student has not grasped grade 11 French as we know it, that particular credit course, my question very simply is: What do you do? Do you redesign a course that may be grade 11.5? Do you simply leave the student at that level to repeat the exact same course and move on in other subjects? Do you just pass him on in a social promotion way?

Mr. Reilly: That would assume that the kind of benchmark we are talking about is still broken down into the grade level concept.

Mr. Mahoney: No, it could be the credit they are taking.

Mr. Reilly: A student could still take a credit and be unsuccessful in it. I think then there would be a choice for the student about what to do about that credit, but that would need to be conveyed to the parent and the student in terms of the student's whole program. You cannot, I agree, get into, "He needs three weeks of French, and, "He needs four weeks of French," but I think the choices could be made much more clear to the student and it would not affect the total program of the student. Right now, we are inclined to say that if they are not doing well in a certain subject, the only alternative is either do it again or drop it.

Mr. Mahoney: Or remedial.

Mr. Reilly: We really do not have that, especially at secondary; we do not have that remedial. It is really phasing down if you can manage it in the timetable into what is really another stream. Very often, when you start that process the timetable is hard to put together and you end up with them in a stream or half in a stream you do not want them in because of maybe one weakness.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I have a supplementary? Did you say there was absolutely no remedial at secondary, Mr. Reilly?

Mr. Reilly: In terms of a course which is geared to a group of students. We will withdraw a student for special instruction in something. My experience of that is that it is not a great success for a couple of reasons. It is stigmatizing, for one thing. Second, it is difficult to learn, especially a skill, in isolation from something that is meaningful. I do not know if you have had the experience, but if you go to a night school class because you want to learn woodworking and are told you will make a bookcase or a stool and you have no interest in a bookcase or a stool, I think you will not last and you will not learn. What happens with remedial at secondary is that you are out of the program to get that kind of remedial or you are in another stream. Those choices are not very enticing.

Mrs. O'Neill: You do not have a resource unit full-time in every one of your secondary schools? Is that what you are saying?

Mr. Reilly: We have a special education unit in every one of our secondary schools and we

have basic units. The special education will deal, for example, with students with learning disabilities. We have students going after school for extra help, as they call it, but we do not in terms of the program have a group of students who can for credit, as credit counts at secondary, get something on a short-term basis. Even in semestered schools, you are in or out for a semester or a course.

Mr. Mahoney: Just to in a very friendly way challenge one statement–and I agree with the statement–that to pull someone out for remedial work can be stigmatizing, why do you do it?

Mr. Reilly: Because right now, it is about the only alternative.

Mr. Mahoney: We have heard people come before us from every sector of the education industry and make similar types of statements, yet it is virtually rampant. It is the way LD kids are dealt with. If they are not isolated, they are certainly taken out for remediation. Yet we hear it is wrong and I would have to think it is within the power of the local board not to do that if it decides not to do that. I am not picking on you, Tom, although I have experience with your board in this regard, but I find it rather frustrating in a sense to have the professionals come forward and say, "We must not do this," when in fact it is being done.

1700

Mr. Reilly: Could I go back to the other concept? The other part of that question is when do we do anything about something like that? We usually do it when there is a crisis or when there is a great difficulty. Early identification programs and teachers with eyes and ears who can observe will tell you that long before that, they have seen signs that something else may be needed.

That is the concept that we have tried to build in here and, I think, kind of gets glossed over and that is that somebody should be an advocate for the student. Every student should be a special education student, if you like, with somebody watching their program and early in the game say, "This particular student is running into difficulty with mathematical concepts. What can we do about that?" It is left very often to the classroom teacher, particularly in the elementary grades, to do that for the 28 or 30 students, as well as all the other things that are being done.

That is why we would be dismayed if a great deal of time, energy and money went into reorganizing the structure, if that kind of contact, daily nurturing of students, making them feel somebody is really interested, I mean really interested where they are looking at the positive, as well as the negative, if that was continually ignored.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess, in summary, that advocate should be the parent as much as possible, but it is difficult for parents to–

Mr. Reilly: But they do not have the access to the information.

Mr. Mahoney: No, that is right. Okay. Thanks very much.

Mr. Furlong: I am interested in the statements with respect to temporary grouping for instructional purposes. Am I to understand that this is the position of the separate board, that this in fact goes on in your school system? Because what I am told by parents and students is that it is not a temporary grouping. It becomes a permanent grouping throughout the whole of the child's school life and, as a result, when you end up making the jump to secondary schools, you then run into a situation where they take the recommendation of the grade 8 teacher and on it goes and all of a sudden the branding that the student gets is, "You are going to fit into a general-level or you are going to fit into a basic-level program."

I do not know. I am asking the question, is the theory supposed to be that ability grouping is a temporary teaching tool, or is it in fact something that becomes permanent?

Mr. Ferren: The point I am making in that comment was that the appropriate instructional technology is grouping, not streaming. You may use grouping. It is used in elementary schools quite extensively, more than in secondary schools, but it is an instructional technique whereby you may be remediating. It may be a grouping for remediation. It may be a grouping for enriching experiences. It may be grouping for some arts experiences. In other words, you are taking that class that you had before you and you are identifying the needs of the individuals within it and you are grouping from time to time in order to assist everybody and to meet the individual needs of those students.

What happens at secondary, in our present practice is that we move from that mode at the elementary and we go into a streaming mode at secondary, not all of them, but generally that is what happens. You are going into vocational, a technical program or a business program, and that is a different stream and you stay there. I suppose where it has its most damaging effect is on the students who get streamed totally into basic programs because of our perception of the

abilities of those particular students. I think it is particularly evident in terms of the secondary level. The general-level programs, are where we have experienced the least success, the most failure, as Radwanski pointed out, and that is a fact in our secondary schools.

Mr. Furlong: Just going back to the elementary schools for a moment, I get the impression that this ability grouping that you are talking about is not a temporary thing. It becomes permanent in that even the students identify themselves, however you classify them–the teddybears, the Smurfs and other things. They categorize them. I will give you an example because all of a sudden I am interested.

I said to my kid, "What do you do in your school?" She said, "We have our class grouped in three groups. There is the bright group, the average group and the dummies." I said, "Does that change around? Do you go between them?" She said, "Very seldom."

Now again, it is only a month into the school year, but I get the impression, and speaking to kids going into high school, that they feel the same way. They were in lower groupings through the elementary panel and then they get to high school, and I have talked to teachers as late as last Friday who indicated to me that, "When we are trying to coach the kid who is before us and the student is coming in and saying, 'What am I going to do?' we rely heavily on recommendations or on the record that the child brings with him." I am concerned that, I guess, streaming starts an awful lot earlier than secondary school.

Mr. Ferren: I would not have the statistics on that, but what I am saying is that in fact that may happen in instances, but it certainly is not a recommended instructional procedure within our school. Nor is it the position of the separate school, since you asked that question, but the purpose of the grouping, I think, is to do a specific task for a particular period of time and then that student is part of the mainstream. They are not put into permanent groups.

Mr. Furlong: What would you do if the magic wand was waved tomorrow and streaming was abolished? How then is a child coming into the secondary school system–I am told that even if we did that, the streaming would still take place because you would have grade 9A, which would be your advanced, your grade 9B would be your general and 9C, 9D, 9E and down the road, and in fact even though it would not be there in name, it would still be there in fact. How else do you do it? How does the principal allocate the students when they come into the school?

Mr. Ferren: I do not have the program worked out, but I have thought about what you would do. There is that danger. There is no question. There is always that danger to come to the easy route and again try to group the students one way or another or stream then one way or another by A, B, C, D, but that obviously is not what we are going to try to do, if we are going to delay that process. I think we have to look at the whole type, look again at the traditional type of organization for the instructional program at the secondary school level and how we use the teachers. I think that we are not making use of all of the types of techniques that are available even within OSIS to instruct appropriately at the secondary school level.

I am going to go back to resource-based learning. We have the library resource centres. We have the community at large. I do not even think we have tapped those things in terms of restructuring the school year. I think they all have to be tied into that. We think in terms of organizing a day into certain sections of 20 each or 25 each. We do not think in terms of organizing a section in the area of arts that may be five students doing something. We do not generally look at a mathematics program where in fact we might have 60 students, depending upon the type of program or the type of topic that we are dealing with. At that particular point in time, you may have throughout the school all different types of organizations taking place. You may have students doing independent learning.

I do not think we have tapped those things now. That is why I referred to some of the items under OSIS, the advantages that I see in OSIS that we have not, and I will say we as professionals, as the educators, taken the lead or maybe we have not had time to do that. Certainly that is why I do not want to see the whole program upset again, because I think there are a lot of opportunities available to us to reorganize the secondary school within the present scope of OSIS, particularly approaching it from the idea of resource-based learning.

Grouping, whatever you want to call it, but however I organize it, if it is on a group basis, I am doing it because those are the particular needs of that group of students at this time. I may be dealing with grade 9 English programs or first-year English programs in a variety of ways. Some of it may be by whole class instruction while others are on independent programs. Some may be out of the school doing a certain part of

the English program. I think we have to take a total new look at our organizational patterns.

Madam Chairman: Did you have a final comment?

Miss Lynn: If I just may add to the points that Peter has made. I believe that the policy of the Ministry of Education allows that kind of exploration at the present time. OSIS, subsection 1.5, states quite clearly the point that "individual differences are to be accommodated to the greatest extent possible." It allows for the "careful and perceptive adaptation of courses." Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions, on page 19, says in the statement printed there that individual children and their ways of learning will remain the basic criteria in choosing content."

I think policies allow for that kind of exploration already, but I am not sure that the professionals feel that there is the confidence to allow them to really explore without the concept that we are putting forth, that there should be an individual advocate for students to really explore all of the alternatives that are available under OSIS.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Barbara. I would also like to thank the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association for your contribution to our committee today.

Miss Lynn: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: The select committee on education stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow morning in room 151.

The committee adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

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Hansard
Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Organization of the Education Process

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First Session, 34th Parliament
Tuesday, October 4, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, October 4, 1988

The committee met at 9:34 a.m. in room 151.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO
(continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open this session of the select committee on education as we continue our review of the organization of the education system in Ontario. As you know, we have been looking at streaming, semestering, grade promotion and OSIS.

I apologize for the fact that there is no coffee yet this morning. Due to the fact that we have changed our room, I think they have had difficulty finding us. However, with the two presenters we have this morning, I do not think we will have any difficulty staying alert. It promises to be a very stimulating morning.

I am most pleased to welcome Lloyd Dennis. Mr. Dennis, will you come forward, please.

Interjection.

Mr. Dennis: These are part of my concrete materials.

Madam Chairman: We are already favourably disposed to you then for that magnificent effort.

LLOYD A. DENNIS

Mr. Dennis: It is all right. I am used to working under duress.

I was not expecting to be invited to appear before you and I was somewhat startled to see you dig out of the woodwork an old Neanderthal in education like myself. I wondered at first what the relevance might be, since relevance is one of your prime areas of interest. I thought perhaps it was because I myself was a dropout at the age of 16 that you invited me. Then I thought it was more related to my work with Living and Learning. Whatever the case, I would like to begin by offering the point that I do not envy you in your challenge. I can imagine by now that you have been deluged by all kinds of opinion in education, because they are quite rampant in our province traditionally, and I am here to add further drops of rain to what must already be a rather damp experience for you.

I have no panacea to offer in education. I have nothing but my own opinion, like all the others. I do speak to you, however, as a teacher. Although I have occupied a number of positions in education over the years, I maintain for myself that identity. I am a schoolteacher in Ontario and although I have been out of the active service for some 10 years, and that may in itself discredit my opinion, I am here to offer it on your invitation. I would like to begin with some general comments about the field and then place myself before you for your questions.

In order to make my point, I would like to assume the role of a classroom teacher this morning. I would like to invite you into my class. Please do not consider that impertinent on my part or some grandstanding style of presentation, but it is only to try to draw your attention to where the prime interest lies in education. It is in the classroom.

I am an Ontario classroom teacher this morning. My class is here behind me, all the odds and sods that society pours into my class every September. When I came into my school this September, I came with my eyes bright with anticipation and expectation, like all the teachers. There are over 100,000 of us in Ontario. We came to our schools this fall eager to go. One of the reasons I was so eager is that I am very proud to be a teacher in Ontario. I am one of the best-paid, best-dressed, best-educated and most committed teachers the world has to offer, and that is a fact. I stand really tall, in spite of the deluge of criticism that seems to harass my every movement in the classroom. That is the way I feel about my job. I came in this year ready to go and eager to serve my country in this role, which I consider to be somewhat noble, a schoolteacher.

Mind you, now it is in October and I feel as if I have just entered the hunting season. Every fall we go out for ducks, deer, moose and, it seems, schoolteachers. The criticism usually begins traditionally around the day after Labour Day. It builds up to a crescendo around Christmas and only Mattel toys and a few other distractions draw the heat away from my classroom for the moment. It seems somewhat of a custom in our province to heat up the argument about education at the very time when my school, this sensitive instrument of society, needs all the support and encouragement it can get.

It is little wonder then that by the time Christmas does roll around, these bright eyes of mine will dull somewhat by what seems to be an attack upon what I consider to be, and others too, one of the finest educational delivery systems the world has to offer. I do not say that in any defence as a schoolteacher. It is just a fact that when people come from other parts of the world to Ontario, they look in amazement at a system that in a multicultural society delivers so much bounty in so many diverse directions to so many people.

I would like to make the point to this committee, on behalf of my students and on behalf of my profession, that I live and work, and I am proud to do so, in an educational system that is one of the best in the world. It is world-class.

One might wonder then if others around the world and others too in Ontario see this system as a sophisticated and rather enlightened delivery system, why all the criticism? When I look at it objectively as a schoolteacher, I must be careful not to draw up my defences and say there is nothing to criticize. Of course, there is. We have all kinds of improvements to make in education in Ontario, even though we would describe it as one of the best in the world.

One of the problems I see as a schoolteacher, and you need only look at my class and my mandate this year, is that you have given me too much in too short a time to fulfil your great expectations. This is a society of great expectations. It may be that we have become a little jaded, not having reached them as well as we might have as a culture, but having given me, the schoolteacher, this great challenge to meet these great expectations, I am quick to tell you I cannot meet them all. I certainly cannot meet them all in an atmosphere of attack and sometimes unthinking criticism. You ask me to do too much for too many in too short a time. Is it any wonder then that I would fail you on occasion, and I do?

My system is overloaded. My school was built over 100 years ago. You happened to name it after one of the heroes of the first great war. We might even call him the butcher of the Somme now, but in any case this great fortress that we built over 100 years ago has the earmarks of a long tradition of educational service.

Had I been teaching those 100 years, I would have noted that my timetable was full. Each period of duress that my culture experiences finds another thing borne on my timetable, on my curriculum. When something goes wrong with this culture, it seems convenient to look down the road and find a school there to put the problem on the timetable. One wonders where I would get the time. My timetable was full 100 years ago. You keep adding. My year has not changed.

By the way, we are still working on the agrarian calendar. We take two months off in the summer for the harvest. My children do not spell harvest. Mr. Radwanski will be quick to tell you that probably, but my point is that this aged system that was built in a static society, not to take us into the future but to maintain the past, is now asked to lead us into the space age.

With this continuing burden to the curriculum and to the teacher, is it any wonder that you look at me and see a teacher somewhat harassed? Certainly, my stress level is much higher. The task I have in the classroom would startle those of you who have not been near one for the last 40 years. It is quite a different place now. My students are quite different. They are not the kinds of students you would remember perhaps. This is not the age that you may remember.

Education in my classroom is not perhaps what you think it is with this inflexible system that I have, with this rather traditional view of what the teacher does. Take these empty-headed little idiots into the classroom, pack them full of the content of the past, periodically test them with a dipstick called an exam, pull it out and when it reads full, go to university or get a job in a service station. It is not that way. I do not see it that way as a teacher.

Now you may say that you know teachers who do not work hard, who are overpaid or whatever. It becomes rather trite to say that about another organization. I know teachers who do not work all that hard. They do not work as hard as I do. But generally speaking, I would say the teachers who serve you now are working almost beyond their limit. They are still trying, because they have a tradition of commitment in this culture, to meet those expectations that you give them.

See these students. This morning I am competing for their attention in a society that has so many titillating offerings to put before them that even if I undress during my history class this morning, I cannot keep them awake against the other kinds of attraction they have in this culture.

You asked why is Bruce going to drop out? Why would Marilyn be gone at Christmas? I will tell you why. The competition I have for their interest in learning is immense now. Gathering all the resources I possibly could will not keep Bruce beyond Easter unless you pass a law and say, "Thou must stay with Dennis all year," which of course is against my best principles of teaching and learning.

I want to draw the point to you that I am in the business of competition now. This boy is going to leave because he finds it much more attractive to go out and make money in a rather materialistic society than stay here and struggle through history with me. One of the great arts of a good teacher is to keep this student and make learning so compelling and so interesting for him, so provocative that even making $1,000 a week will not draw him away from me. That is a great challenge I have.

I offer you the invitation to come into my school, stay there for a week and see what that challenge is like. If you do not think I am doing it well enough, try it yourself to keep this person in a learning experience that is both fruitful for him and beneficial for society. My first point is that the competition I face as a teacher is immense today.

When you look at the issues of education today–perhaps you would like to begin there–you look at a society that has to some extent the following characteristics: It is a self-indulgent, materialistic society, eager for the short gain and the short run, finding the quickest way to do a thing, the easiest way to do a thing. This culture titillates the senses. It does not reach into the depths of the soul to find the meaning of life. It does not even reach for a value system by which we can feel proud. I have that kind of problem too.

I know what the learning experience is for my students. I am a school teacher and I would tell you that the issues that seem to be so prevalent today, such as whether you should stream or whether you should not, whether you give external exams or whether you should not, whether you should force a student to take history beyond his interest or whether you should not, are not the chief interests in this culture. The chief interests in this culture right now–or I would submit, as a school teacher, should be–are not to get 80 per cent in history so much as to find a way to preserve ourselves as human beings in a society that seems to be hell-bent now on self-destruction.

That is the curriculum in my school. Of course, you are going to spend a lot of time deciding which subjects are the most important, but I would tell you that those are all secondary to the chief purpose of my school and the chief purpose of my students here today. They are trying to find a way, intrinsically, whether they express themselves or not, of surviving. They are trying to find a way for human beings to so nurture this life that we have and the resources we have so that they do not destroy it by the year 2000.

I submit as a school teacher that one of my great preoccupations is to so use my disciplines, the subjects I teach, that I will take them through an examination period, not so they can proudly tell their parents they got 80 per cent, but to provoke them into the idea of education and learning for its enlightenment, for the salvation of the human species, if you like, for all of us, not just those of us who live in Ontario. In that regard, when they learn with me, they learn individually; they come individually. They are not a class. I do not teach a class.

You call it a class; you call it 372B, and here I am in my room with 372B, but there are all kinds and shapes of motivation in this class. Some of them are motivated by their parents. Some of them are motivated by themselves. Some of them are not motivated at all. Some are here because it is warmer here. Some are here because it is quieter here in the history class. I know that. It is an individual challenge I have here for each of these students.

I know the principles about learning. It is an individual, personal experience they are having. I do not care whether you mandated the classes–how comforting it would be to think everybody was learning history at 10 o'clock this morning, all learning the same things, 372 facts by Christmas. Then we will put them through an exam and we will see who fell through the cracks and we will make them do it again, will we not? Can you imagine, Bruce, he is 34 years old, in my class and I am still trying to get him to remember when Champlain died? He says, "I didn't even know he was in the school."

I know how I teach and how you as our representatives in government would mandate education. What you would lay on for the schools surely must be bound by the fact that this country was built and its tenet is the preservation of the individual purposes of human beings to express those individual purposes to such a degree that we live with a collective conscience in some kind of harmonious diversity. If that were true, then surely you would not find a way to force me into some kind of 19th-century philosophy of education that would drive me into a meaning of life and a position of education that is no longer appropriate.

Learning is an individual matter and it is a personal matter for my students. It is not so much the absorption of content. Of course, content in history or mathematics or in any other discipline is the tool of understanding, but my main

purpose, what I am really after, is to get Bruce to understand, and to get him to so understand that he finds great delight in the understanding of it. I do not want, therefore, to spend my time in the classroom trying to get him to remember 1,400 things so that he can regurgitate them at the moment, whether the state calls for regurgitation or whether I do, so much as I want him to have his eyes lit up by his presence with me and by this pursuit of the unknown.

I want to be careful not to leave the impression that I dismiss content out of hand. Of course, I do not. I am a teacher and I use content as a tool of my profession, but it is not the be-all and end-all. In the ultimate, it is how Bruce behaves as an adult in this society with what I did with him in his learning experience. Hopefully, he will go on learning long after I am dead and never feel that because he graduated and has 14 different certificates pinned on his arm, he is therefore an educated person.

My goal then is to make learning so compelling for each individual in my room that all of them can go their various ways through this life, not by one route but by many. I was always so proud to be an Ontario teacher, and still am, because apparently we have said in this culture that education is not to follow a narrow path by which we identify at the end of it success for the educated student, but to find a way to provide educational services that allow great diversity. Therefore, I see a society like ours having its maturity measured by the degree of diversity it offers in the learning experience, not by the reduction of that diversity but by the extension of it. You do not do that by uniformity, however compelling that route might be.

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I can understand those who would appear before you and say: "It is a simple matter. You take them all and you put them through the priority interests such as the academic disciplines and make them all measure up to a certain standard and then you've got success." I submit that you do not necessarily have it at all. I do not think, fundamentally, that you reach the purposes of a mature culture by uniformity and conformity. On the contrary, you reach the maturity of a culture by providing for the diversity of interest and ability that is already inherent in this class. Their abilities are not the same. It would be a foolhardy approach if we would say that there is a common standard by which we measure all people and when they do not measure up to it, they fall by the wayside.

I have one or two other comments before I submit myself for questioning. We talk about what programs we might offer. Here we are in 1988 and we are asking the age-old question, what should we teach our children? I urge you not to go back to the previous formula of education of another century. What should tell you what we should teach? What should tell you, of course, is where we are going and what the signposts are on the road ahead.

One of them is this: We have a value system in this province that has slipped to the degree that one would hardly call it a value system at all. It is based on expediency. That is hardly a philosophical position in which a state should place itself. So I submit that one of the great challenges for us in school is to further the attachment to a system of values by which we live our lives every day and that is not measured only by a mathematical percentage.

Another is the protection of this environment. I am not naming new subjects, by the way. I am naming new priorities for our culture. The preservation of our environment, not just the physical environment but the human environment in which we live. I was born not into a competition of life. If I had been, then I should challenge God for what she did to me, because I am not that equipped to meet Mr. Keyes, for example, on all fronts, and that is the way it is with my students.

They did not even ask to come to my class this morning. The state put them there, if you like. I have to be very careful to recognize that one of the things they need is a skill in protecting the environment in which they live, the environment of their resources, their physical environment, but also their environment of the other humans with whom they share this world.

Another priority is the method in which we govern ourselves in a democratic society. We may well be bent on the road to hell in terms of representative government. I am looking at my students this morning and I find great cynicism. They watch the adult model in the society. By the way, I may think I am all-important with my class this morning, but there is a more pervasive teacher out there on the street, and I would urge you to recognize that when you come to decide what you consider to be the priorities of education today. The culture is the great teacher of the youth in my class, not Lloyd Dennis. I am one of the ancillary teachers here, but they get their value system, their attitude towards environment, government and human interrelations

by what they see in the model out there by other adults.

Sometimes as a teacher when I read other briefs that have come before you, I would like to be here to invite those people who so chastise the schools for their failures to come and spend one week in my school to see what it is, this complicated, sophisticated process of teaching and learning.

One of the things I think should be a priority in education today is to help these students find a way of managing change that faces them in their lives. We would not want to make it a subject. Can you imagine? Compulsory: "change," every Wednesday, properly streamed so that the dull take only part of the change. Of course, change is a problem. It is an ever-present phenomenon, especially today in our society. Surely one of the things I should do for my students is help them face this society with some sense of adequacy in the management of the changing lifestyles they see around them.

There are global imperatives in this world today that hang out there like ghosts. Do they find their way into little provincial curriculum areas or do they not? Are they in France and Germany and Russia and Spain? Are they in Ontario? Ontario is one of the most sophisticated and enlightened systems trying to find ways of pursuing these challenges that face us in the future.

The greatest challenge, I think, is this one for you. It is not whether you should stream or whether you should have examinations externally imposed by the state or whether you should have pupils repeat a year or whatever. Those are the picayune areas and issues of education. The great challenge is, how do you fine-tune an already good educational system so that it is conscious and preoccupied with anticipatory learning, learning that will help Bruce to face his challenge as an adult?

Do you therefore lockstep students through a school system? Do you grade them like eggs and put them through categories for 10 months of the year and then cull out and sell cheaply on the market those who fail, or do you consider what they really are? They are human beings, with all the great variety of interests and abilities that God or genetics, depending on your inclination, gave them.

Do we lock them into school and say, "You have to stay in school until you are 18 or 20 to keep you off the labour market"? Do we segregate these students and say, "All the tall ones go down the hall and the short ones stay with me"? How do we handle this? If I knew, of course, I would be the Minister of Education, at least. I do not know precisely. I would not be so foolhardy as to come before you with a plan and say, "Here is what you do."

I do know that the issues are much more complicated and important than what may appear to be on the scene. So often in education we spend our time and our energy with the trappings of the schools rather than with the real guts of the school and what really happens in the learning and teaching experience.

Surely, they drop out. I would like to make this point. I teach in a system in Ontario where the dropout rate is rather low. You can imagine how bad I feel when I read in the paper that the schools are a failure in Ontario because the dropout rate is so high. In my system, it is not high. It should at least interest you that in certain large metropolitan areas the dropout rate is tremendous; in certain other parts of Ontario, the dropout rate is minimal. It might be more fruitful for you to pursue why, in one area, students are retained longer than they are in another. Is it because the school in that area is better than the other one? Or does it have something to do with another force, this pervasive influence of the materialistic culture that draws a student away in spite of good teaching?

I do not offer you this as a defence. Please do not see it that way. Sure, there are lots of us who do not teach all that well and there are lots of lawyers who do not practice well and other areas of our lives where we find weaknesses and strengths. I do not mind your criticizing the school or my classroom if you can find specifically where I am not meeting this kind of challenge, but I hope that you will not drop a wet blanket over all of us.

In Ontario, it is so facile to say, "The school system is failing the youth of our province." Some of them may be; some of them may not be. But even having identified where there are failings, perhaps you would like to pursue the next question: Why are they failing in that particular school? Is it because the curriculum is no good or the teachers are no good or they do not have enough TV sets or enough computers? Or does it have something to do with the culture itself?

My last point is that although you think school is an alienated little building down the road where learning takes place, it is not where the major learning takes place. The major learning takes place in the model set by the parents and the people on the street and in commerce, and the

very chamber of commerce that appears before you has a responsibility for some of the ills which it would announce are the province of the schools.

The paper that I placed before you has taken a slightly different tack than the usual, although being an old schoolteacher I am a bit hidebound even so, so it is not all that startling. You need not glance through it now for titillating advice, because it is not there. But I did try to draw attention to the phenomenon of criticism and attack only to suggest it for what it is—a kind of phenomenon that I hope you will address objectively.

The paper discusses that in point form. It draws attention to the fact that the school is a very sensitive instrument, like a hospital, and you have to be careful when you tinker with it lest you destroy that sensitive instrument.

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It also asks you to consider a couple of points about the learning process and the organization for that process and, further, about some strategies you might consider now that you have an opportunity in the long parade of attempts to improve education in Ontario. Those strategies are suggesting things such as: taking your time; not starting with a new broom every four or five years; noting, for example, that you put OSIS into place in 1984, teachers do not even have all the guidelines yet and now it seems to be swept aside as a failure when it has not had a chance to prove itself.

Strategies for Change is suggesting that you take a new look at managing change in education in order that you do not destroy what you already have built as one of the finest systems the world has to offer.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Dennis. We very much appreciate the fact that you took the time to come before our committee. We know that you did not seek the invitation, but nevertheless we very much wanted you to be here. As far as capturing the attention of your students is concerned, I think I have never seen members of the Legislative Assembly so enraptured by a presentation. You certainly have extended our attention span, if nothing else. Many of your comments, I think, will bear fruit.

We will start the questioning now with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Dennis, for a wonderful beginning to our morning. It is quite understandable why you have had such an effect on education over the years with the attitudes you bring to it. It is difficult for us, who deal with the picayune, to try to deal with somebody who does not want us to deal with those matters, but I think you would agree that the structures we have in education should and do reflect the real philosophy or themes we have in education. Whether they reflect a stated philosophy is another matter, and that is why I hope you agree that dealing with things like streaming is important to us.

I was just rereading your commission's work, Living and Learning, and thinking just how current it still is as a document, which is, I think, a great statement for something that is now as old as it is. There are some themes that have been bothering me that I wanted to raise with you, because they come in your report Living and Learning and you address them in point 3 in your strategies in terms of the connection between societal problems and the school.

In your report you say, on page 39, "We also have children in this rich province who are starving for attention, receiving inadequate diets, living in filthy, crowded rooms, lacking privacy and destined to be losers in our society from a very early age." If I look at the education system in general terms and look at the kind of diverse success that you have talked about, I would concur with this.

There are a couple of areas where it has not met expectations, whether those expectations are real or unrealistic. One of them is in terms of the poor of this province and any kind of effect on their social mobility—I think it is part of the mythology of our society that education would help liberate them—and in terms of some particular groupings in our society, specifically the natives, which you again, in your report Living and Learning, spent a lot of time on.

If you look at the effects of streaming and other societal factors on the poor, the outcome still seems to be that they come out more poorly educated or with a lower degree of education than their middle-class brothers and sisters in our communities. If I can relate this to the general themes of the goals of education, we have always stated our goals of education in individualist fashion in terms of the self-actualization of our kids. That is a great notion, except that I begin to wonder whether it does not mask the fact that we have been leaving back whole parts of our society and whether maybe it is time for us to deal with setting some social goals, collective goals for education as well as some individualist goals and trying to set them realistically, understanding what the limits might be.

I wonder if you have any thoughts for us in terms of either the limits we can expect for an education system in helping those children or whether it is worth while setting some goals and then some structures to make sure the extra help is given to those particular communities to make sure they do get the same opportunities the rest of us have.

Mr. Dennis: Yes, I do. I think one of the great hindrances we have is being caught with a structure that is no longer appropriate to meet the social needs of a new kind of society. You will note that the school systems across this province are not radically different irrespective of the different social environment in which they find themselves. The poor, old school still struggles rather superficially with fundamentally new problems. What I would suggest is that the school system has to be as diverse as the need that confounds it.

There is no need to have the same kind of school organization or school system in an urban area, for example, that is fraught with this kind of problem as you would have in another part of Ontario. The kind of delivery system surely should be in direct response to the kind of clientele you have in the schools. I think the first thing we need is to break away from this attachment to the rather formal structure of the traditional school system.

One of the things one might note in Ontario is that irrespective of the different challenges schools are offered, they remain fundamentally the same. The staffing, for example, is fundamentally the same. In some areas, of course, in Ontario you will find new inputs of human resources in schools that need that kind of thing and certain kinds of new programs, but I do not think they are nearly as imaginative or as fundamentally different as they need be.

I am suggesting, then, that in the area of trying to find social equality through the schools, you do not address it first at the school; you address it at the other influences in society, for example, the competitive nature of the culture to define materialist success. That will not be possible given our tenet of a democratic system, but it begins there. You cannot go to the school and say "Repair this damage" or "Address this imbalance" at the school by itself. It cannot be done. But I think schools can do a lot of it by providing new programs and different programs for students who need different kinds of attention and certainly more human resources.

When you take a look at the school system, by and large it is staffed pretty well on a uniform basis. Of course, in some downtown schools you will find certain adjuncts you may not find in a more affluent area, but I think they are rather picayune and I think the curriculum is expected to be the same. Perhaps the curriculum should be somewhat different, but there we get into the business of–immediately, the word "streaming" comes to mind and many would say that has militated against equality of opportunity rather than supported equality.

Living and Learning, you will note, in spite of some of the other suggestions it made, did not support streaming. It did not because at that time we were afraid of the labelling effect of segregating students for instruction. But it is 20 years later and I am bound to say that in areas of Ontario I could name, the approach to separating students for instruction according to their ability has paid off immensely well. It depends on how it is done and where it is done and what the public expects.

When I take this class, when you look at them you can see they are not all that competent academically. You would say they have probably been streamed. I hope they understand that is in jest. I do not call them dullards, you see. I am looking at them as a doctor would look at a patient. You do not put all the patients in one operating room irrespective of the illness. You do not say, "Legs off Thursday." I take these students to try and enhance their interest and their abilities by separating them so I can concentrate and be rather clinical in my approach to leaven their bread a bit. If I had left them all in with the others, I think they might have been lost. That approach I do not dismiss out of hand, even though Living and Learning was in principle against streaming.

I think that human resources in the schools and a public commitment to that problem is one of the best things you can do. But that is going to cost a lot of money and it is going to mean different kinds of class groupings for students than we have today and a greater co-ordination between the different services we have, our governmental services, for example, or community services. Maybe we should not even call it a school. Maybe it is a human resource centre and maybe all kinds of facets of our community should work hand in hand with me with my class this morning.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of the things that struck a lot of us recently–you did not dwell on it a lot; you just alluded to it at one point–is the role of parents. Your report, Living and Learning, deals with attempts to try to increase parental

involvement. Yesterday, we had before us an organization called PARC, the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre, here in the city, which deals with kids who are wards of the state and do not have any chance for a positive or negative sort of motivation from their parents.

Surely one of the keys to getting the school in the poorer district to be more effective is in some way to enhance the role of parents in that situation, or to take on some of the functions of parents in those areas where that is not going to be possible for all sorts of economic and social reasons. Do you have any further thoughts 20 years afterwards than those ideas you had, which struck me as being much more applicable to the middle-class parent than to the involvement of the parent of a poorer family?

Mr. Dennis: In principle, I would argue still that an invigorating school in a community is one that involves the public to a maximum degree, in partnership with the teachers, but in reality a large number of people in our society, by the nature of their local or family condition, feel alienated from the institution or from the school.

I cannot be all things to all people, but I would like to involve those parents in a learning experience themselves, not just for their children, so maybe the school belongs to them, but of course they are out busy making a buck. One of the problems is they are both out doing that so much that the student is somewhat forsaken, but I would feel we should see the school more as a learning experience for all people.

It is not just to correct the student's problems that result from parental problems; it is to help the parent address the problem as a parent. Maybe one of the imaginative things we will do in that area is to consider the school a place for parents. I do not know whether you would pay the parent to come or what you would do in order to attract that parent away from the job, but if the problem lies where we think it does, that is, sometimes in poor parenting, perhaps we cannot address it by further schooling for the child as much as we can in leavening the parents' bread as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That brings me nicely to my final point. It seems to me we use a lot of labels that may be accepted since the days of Living and Learning, such as individualized learning and lifelong learning, concepts which are to one degree or another accepted within the structures of our system. Looking at the information yesterday that we were just briefly able to glean from some of the Statistics Canada information around education and social levels, it is really clear that a very large percentage of our people, in some areas as high as 36 or 37 per cent of the people in the age group 25 to 45 in this province, have less than grade 12 education, and yet we know they do not re-involve themselves in the education system in continuing ed; it is always those who have gone to university who seem to participate the most.

Given that they are going to be in the workforce for the next 30 years, and increasingly in a more difficult workforce for those people, in terms of their lack of skills and basic training, what advice do you have in terms of making lifelong learning a reality for those kinds of people who are going to need it most in a structural sense, it seems to me, as we move into the next century?

Mr. Dennis: One of the reasons those students in that category find school so alien to their interests is because, fundamentally, many of those schools appear like they did 50 years ago. They do not embrace that area of interest. That is what I suggest our first attention might be given to. Why does the school seem to be so alien to that interest? Instead of saying, "You have got to gear yourself up to match what we are as a school," perhaps we have to take down that identity and reform it so that it would embrace you in your area of interest and make the learning programs more compelling for them, less threatening in the first instance. I think that after the attraction is got and the retention is realized, then perhaps we can pursue more precise learning skills that would help that student in furthering his pursuits economically or in jobs.

The other point is that perhaps we should not be so frightened sometimes by a student leaving because we want to invite him back. It may be the kind of school that says: "I am here always. I am here for you when you are 40. I am here for you when you are 30. This is not just a teenage school. This is a school for all people." It would be with a large degree of counselling.

I agree with Mr. Radwanski, for example, when he recommends more mentoring of human resources in the schools. "Mind you, I do not have the time this morning. I have been given 31 people. I have got 40 minutes to teach history and you ask me to look after Mary. We think she is pregnant, but we are not sure, and Bruce is worried over there because he may be involved."

The difficulty is the pressure cooker in which we all work. They have to make exam commitments by Christmas. I have got to get through the course of studies. That person you are talking about is perhaps going to slip through the cracks.

Maybe we should not be so concerned about history. We should be concerned about Mary right now. History will come. We will get around to when Champlain died, but first we ought to ensure that she does not die. By the way, the suicide rate is up among our young people again, and what am I doing to address that? I am way off your question, and largely because I do not have an answer for you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It has left me much more concerned about Bruce than I was when he first started.

I just think that if your first recommendation, that an advisory council be established on education matters, is one that ever got accepted by a committee like this or by the government, it would be a poor council if it did not have you involved in it.

Mr. Dennis: Before you go to your next question, I do hope you look at that first Strategies for Change recommendation. It was made by Living and Learning. We were not talking about a Premier's council; we were not talking about a select committee. We were talking about a hands-off advisory council that advises the Legislature–not the government in power–on a regular basis to put in place some kind of overall continuing examination and get us away from the rather haphazard, precipitous shock treatments every three years of what is wrong with our schools, and that is what that recommendation is directed at.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Some kind of combination of that and an ongoing committee on education of legislators, mixed, would be a very interesting concept.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Dennis. It is certainly a tribute to you and to your colleagues that you wrote Living and Learning back in 1968 and so many of the concepts are still very valid in Ontario education today, particularly the concept of individuality of the student, and in this society it changes to rapidly that I think that is a tribute to you.

Anyway, we have a very long list of members who have questions. We have Mr. Beer, Mr. McLean, Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Keyes and Mrs. O'Neill. I think it might have been easier to name the members who did not have questions.

Mr. Beer: Mr. Dennis, it is a pleasure to have you before the committee. I found my old, tattered copy of Living and Learning on the weekend and I think, like others, it is fascinating to go back and read that document in the light of the mandate of this committee and various other things that have happened over the last 20 or so years. Perhaps it is a good thing in a sense when we look at our system that a lot of the same questions keep coming up. It may just mean there is no perfect answer. But I think all of these things lead us to try to improve the system we have.

It seems to me that just in talking about your last question on the advisory council, there is some real merit in a body such as that. I have felt, both from sitting in from time to time with this committee and also in talking to people around the province, that the idea of having a select committee, and particularly one where the presentations have been televised, has provided a tremendous public education in many parts of the province where people are seeing ideas come forward in discussion. If nothing else, I think that certainly helps as we carry on with our task.

When you came before us this morning, you said you were going to wear your hat as teacher and you were really speaking to us as teacher. The more we look at the different kinds of issues that have come up, the ones Richard Johnston was addressing before and many of the others, it seems to me that the critical element in trying to improve always comes back to the teacher. At the end of the day, when our report is done, when your report was done, when Radwanski's was done, when the advisory council makes its recommendations, somehow or other in some configuration there is a teacher and there is a group of young people. No matter how brilliant the program is that we have sketched out, if we have not provided the teacher with both the tools and the ability to create an environment in which learning can take place, it is really all for naught.

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There are many intangibles, I think, in doing that. We can all, if we have been involved in education, walk into a classroom and fairly quickly identify whether learning is taking place. Sometimes that may be in a very structured environment; sometimes it may be in a very unstructured environment. But again, the critical factor is the teacher within that environment and the way in which he or she is in fact leading that lesson, whatever it is.

You commented on the tremendous difference today in the expectations of teachers, the ones that society puts on the teacher, as well as the ones that parents put on the teacher, and the extent to which ultimately we can expect that a teacher can fulfil all those roles; the example of Bruce and Mary while you were trying to get your Christmas exams in shape and do various

other things and teach your lessons, and how to have time for a lot of these other things.

That, I suppose, then leads us back to what our school system should be doing, what we should be doing through the schools and where perhaps we should be insisting that other parts of society are going to have to handle other issues, other problems, because we cannot simply keep adding to the work of the teacher.

In looking back at your experience, in looking back at Living and Learning, how do you feel about where we are going with the kinds of things we are demanding of teachers? How much more ought they to be getting into, or how do we create an environment in which, in a sense, they can take on many different things? Perhaps, within a school, different teachers will take on different extra roles because they are good at it, but it seems pretty clear to me when I look at teachers today that the kinds of things they are doing and the time commitment they are making have in many cases become very severe. I really wonder whether, if we are not careful, that old question of burnout is going to cause tremendous problems, no matter how brilliant we are in trying to come up with proposals for the education system.

Mr. Dennis: A brief answer: The best way to get maximum work out of my class this morning is to give the students a pat on the back and make them feel good, make them feel that this class is a really exciting place in which to be. The first thing you do with a teacher, then, is to make the school environment a celebration. I want to hear from you. I want to hear from my public that you celebrate my good work in the school, even though you recognize that some of us could do better, because the best way to get me to do even better is to say, "Lloyd, we really like what you are doing in school and we're going to support you 100 per cent."

The second thing is to identify honestly those things that impede my teaching and impede my students from learning. They are not all in my weakness. A lot of them are in the environment in which they live. So, identify them; let the public know; let me know that they are not all on my shoulders. That is the second thing, to get the most out of me and to release me from this feeling of stress I have this morning as a teacher.

The next thing is to insist from me that I remain current and even anticipatory about my culture. I do not think I am that adequately prepared to take on Mary and Bruce and their problem this morning, you see. I am a traditional teacher in my training and my education, even though the state has tried to provide programs to make me better.

I think that you should insist from me that I remain current and updated and that I be the best teacher I possibly can be. That is what you do third, but after you have already told me that you think I am trying to meet this problem pretty well. So I suggest updating teachers and a new kind of educational program for teachers to keep me able to address the things I am talking about coming down the road.

I get paid quite well in my culture, as far as I am concerned. I might ask you to take a look at the agrarian calendar on which I work, but that is really going to cause an upheaval in society if I ask you to look at the thing. I would hope that you would see my job as being so sensitive and so difficult on occasion that I need all the encouragement I can get. It is a subtle thing; it is the business of celebration. That is my final point.

Mr. Beer: I think that is quite correct and I think probably all good principals are trying to do that with their teachers, but I would sense that the stress level today for teachers, and this may be wrong, is greater than it was, say, even 10 years ago in that there is a sense that so much is expected of–

Mr. Dennis: May I just jump in on that? It is that additive philosophy we have to the curriculum that does part of that. You see, I do not even have all the guidelines yet for the last changes you introduced in my school and now you are about to suggest others. There is another report coming out saying it is all wrong, start over again, and my goodness, I do not even have in place the last admonition you gave. So I am asking for measured change, management of change.

You would do well in Ontario if you stopped demanding change right now and said: "You know what? We're doing a pretty good job. Let's just settle down and find out where the cracks are. We'll order some cement from the enlightened people of the culture and patch them up." But I am afraid there will be another frenzy in the Legislature shortly and out will come, in due course, some more guidelines from the ministry and I will pile them up with those others I have not got to yet. I am being facetious. Do not demand so many things from me and demand the ones you want better.

Mr. Beer: That answers the question. Thank you.

Mr. McLean: Not every student can have a teacher like you. My concern is, what is the

system doing to stop the students from falling through the cracks?

Mr. Dennis: Some boards in Ontario have very sophisticated and effective retention programs. I will mention Durham off to your east here that has one. There are a number of others.

Please do not feel that all the boards of education systems in Ontario were oblivious to this question until a certain report was issued. We have been concerned about dropouts since I started teaching. It was 70 per cent when I started teaching. We have whittled it down to 30, but that is not true either, you see. In some places, it is lower than eight. Some places have five per cent dropout. That is a success in this culture. Any school that can keep the dropout rate down to five per cent in such a pervasively material society as we have, must be either tying them up or drug–well, I would not say that.

What I would suggest you do is go to those boards that apparently have been successful. What not to do is to take one area, immense though the problem may be, and blanket the whole of Ontario with that indictment. I am afraid that when I, as a teacher, read across the headlines of a newspaper: "Schools fail. Dropout rate 33 per cent," and I look at my school and it is only four per cent, I say, "My goodness, they couldn't have visited me."

What do we do with the students who are falling through? As a teacher, I will try to make myself as compelling as possible in my school. I will try to identify their interest or lack of it and do something about it. Then I will ask you, as a statesman and a member of the citizenry, to do what you can, too, to let them know that, "School is the most attractive place to be today, son, not in my business."

Mr. McLean: In society today, if you are not satisfied with the lawyer you have or the doctor you have or the accountant you have, people in society have a chance to change.

I am a student going to your school. I am not satisfied and I do not like the way you are teaching me. Several of my friends talk in the gym and cafeteria and say: "That Dennis, he talks too much. I just don't like attending his class." There are teachers in the profession who are maybe not doing their job. Do you ever hear of them being replaced? What do you say to me or to the students who are not learning, who are just going through the motions and at the end of the year have passed and gone on but really have not got what they needed? What do you say to them and how do you get those students to listen?

Mr. Dennis: The first thing I say is that I hope I am not the one. The second thing is that I admit they are there, down the hall from me; maybe I am the one. I am speaking as a teacher and must stay in that role, even though you have pinned me now. There is a machinery in place in my board of education to dismiss me for incompetence. You may consider that it is not nearly stringent enough and I might agree with you. I think teaching is so vital that there is no place for incompetence. I even feel that way about politics and law. But that is just for fun.

I would agree that may be one of the more distressing problems for you as a citizen, saying there does not seem to be any handle on dismissal of teachers. My answer to you is that there are far fewer incompetent teachers out there than a headline might lead you to believe.

Sometimes it reads, "Teachers fail, schools fail, therefore they are all incompetent." I would hope that what you do is exercise your right as a paying taxpayer and go to that school board, which is a group like yourselves. If you do not find the policy in your board energetic enough, do something to elect board members who will work with their directors or the federation to see that it is.

1030

Mr. McLean: The point I want to make is that there appears to me not to be an advocate or somebody within that system whom those students can go to if they are not satisfied with their teacher. They do not want to go to the principal. They do not want to talk to the teacher about it. They just sit back.

Mr. Dennis: Living and Learning recommended an ombudsman in education to address problems like this so that every citizen, regardless of stature, would have a place to seek redress. Perhaps it is time to consider ombudspersons at the board level.

Madam Chairman: We have Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Keyes and Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. Mahoney: I will try to be as brief as I can. I found it interesting reading the document you put before us and that your first recommendation is ultimately to abolish this committee.

Interjection.

Mr. Mahoney: Revamp it, okay. In the first part of your presentation this morning, you talked about what we should teach in the schools and how we are all wrestling with that. As I recall, you said we should teach values, some kind of a value system. I guess my question and

the difficulty with that is how we arrive at what is to be taught.

I might be quite happy having you teach one of my sons your particular values but it is not necessarily going to be the case across the board with every teacher. I am not sure that we can define a set of values that should be taught in the school per se.

Rather I was more intrigued by your idea of teaching the parents because we have had people who have come before us who have suggested that there needs to be more parental involvement in the education of their young people and more understanding of what those young people need.

We have the whole scope of things in society today. We have religious groups coming forward saying we should teach multifaith religion courses. We have the Roman Catholics saying we want our religion courses to be mandatory credits, and on and on. These are all part of what I would consider a value system from my school days, which were just before your report, unfortunately. How do you get a standard in a society as mixed and as broad as we have today to be able to teach Bruce and Mary about values?

Mr. Dennis: We have a penchant in our society for taking even the most difficult and philosophical questions that plague us and forming them into a guideline. They appear in the curriculum as a compulsory subject to be examined, such as love and compassion and integrity, which I think is too bad. I am talking about values that do not appear as a subject on the curriculum so much as they embrace all we do in the school and in every way in which we behave in the school.

That values umbrella is not doctrinaire in terms of a religion so much as it is fundamental to the way in which we behave with one another– the matter of being honest. You try hard to do your best and not to cheat when no one is looking. It is that kind of value system that all religions hopefully will accept as not interfering with their particular doctrinaire position.

But more than that, I am asking for a value structure or a behaviour pattern that goes beyond the school so that the manager of the supermarket and the manager of the bank and the men at the garage and the teacher in the classroom all accept this effort that each one should apply to the nurturing of the young, so that we provide a kind of umbrella, if you like, of life that attempts to remain within that kind of formula for good human behaviour. But I hope it would not come out as 14 points to teach on Thursday called values.

I recognize the difficulty, but more than that, I recognize that one of our great problems is the fact that the student living today, the young person living today, feels that he is living in a circus. Anything goes if you do not get caught. They are cynics now. They say: "Why should I be honest? Good God, I just saw in the paper today that so-and-so made a million dollars, not by being honest; by the way, note that we sell lottery tickets.

Mr. Mahoney: If I could ask one other unrelated question to that question, just briefly. If you were working in the system today, would you like semestering or would you be against it?

Mr. Dennis: Once again, personally, I like the idea of semestering because it will give me a longer shot at them this morning than the 40 minutes. The trouble is, I am doing lobotomies here to 30 people today, all at once, and I just about get a head examined when the bell rings and they are down the hall. In 40 minutes, it is rather difficult for me to attack some of the fundamental areas that are so profound.

So I like the idea of the extended period. I like the idea of blocks of time. I like semestering, personally. But I am not going to get hung up if another school says: "We can work it out in a different way. We are not going to semester just yet."

I am really going to go back to what Mr. Beer asked. The quality of the teacher in the classroom, whether semestering or standard, is all-important, and I guess the prerequisite to the success of the school. Personally, I favour semestering.

Mr. Jackson: It is always a pleasure to meet someone who is still in love with education, this late and this consistently in your devoted career. I want to indicate that I deeply appreciate your presence here today and how your presentation has unfolded.

This committee was set upon a rather political agenda, and if I may editorialize, I believe we are evolving to an educational agenda. That is a very healthy sign. One of the helpful reasons for that was that we did not sink our teeth into recommendation 18 of the Radwanski report to give us our meaning and our sense of purpose as a group of nonpartisan legislators. In fact, we looked at the aims and objectives of education as our first task.

I guess to put it in perspective, I am impressed by the fact that so many groups came so consistently in front of us to reiterate in part or in whole your philosophy, as you have enunciated it today.

The first point that I ask you to respond to is that I sense there is great support not for performing major surgery on the system, but in fact for building on the strengths of the system we already have. You may want to comment on that, but it is a fairly leading question, so I will word it this way. What do you consider to be the number one problem in education today?

Mr. Dennis: The fact is, that in our attempt to address all issues all the time—and thereby slip on a number of them · we have allowed education as an institution to become somewhat unmanageable or to appear to be unmanageable. I would apply the principle there that I would apply in my family or with my dogs or my gun collection or my toy collection or whatever. When it becomes unmanageable it must be slipping beyond my understanding, beyond my grasp.

Therefore, I would try to refine it to a degree so that the majority of us could understand what the purpose is. That may mean shaving off some of the paraphernalia and some of the clutter that has got around my dog collection, if you like. So I think that is probably the big problem.

The problem attracts criticism. The criticism debilitates the system and debilitates the people in it. It cuts down the motivation of my students. So I wish to build up their motivation, I wish to be highly motivated myself, I wish my public to embrace me as essentially being a good teacher; therefore I am going to ask that you cut out those issues that are not relevant to the chief purpose of the school. I am going to ask you to narrow down your goals, to enunciate them a little more clearly, whether there are enough or perhaps there are too many. Perhaps, as I said before, we are trying to do too many things. Perhaps some of the things you are asking me to do should be done by industry. I can no longer job-train. I recognize that, for example.

I have to say first of all that I cannot do all things all the time. I never could. So you are going to admit that and you are going to shave down or pare down what the school's challenge is or its chief role, which by the way includes the basics. Everybody seems to talk so much about that.

1040

Mr. Jackson: Whenever I have grappled with that question, I have always responded by addressing the symptom, which is that education today has failed to effectively communicate the positive things we are doing in the schools and for children. I consider that our number one problem. But I see now, by listening to you, that I am actually referring to the symptom and not the malady. In fact, you have better identified that for me and I appreciate it.

Your comments now on that question would indicate that we have some paring to do. I wish we had all day to go through with you about the crowded curriculum and a few other things. You started out by saying that we are expecting too much from education to counterbalance the effects of culture as the great teacher of youth. Yet on the same point, you also make the statement that we should develop a system that is more sensitive, that should attach itself to values, and I see commonality there, not division.

I appreciate that you have made reference, in conceptual form, to much of what Rosemary Brown talks about as the purposes of education, but how do we bring that back into a public school system? I should preface my remarks by saying that I admire the separate system because it is so very clear that it attaches itself to values. Anyone who spent any time in a separate secondary or elementary school sees that and it is abundantly clear. I see some of that missing in our public system.

Given some of the recent announcements about the removal of prayer, the struggle to bring certain values in education back into the school, how do we reconcile that point? I agree with you completely that respect for the environment, for teaching, how we interact with other human beings, the reduction of gender discrimination, sexism, all those things could be mitigated if we could develop a system that attaches itself to values without overcrowding the curriculum, which gets me back to that point. Tell me how we approach that. Give me a better handle on that.

Mr. Dennis: An antecedent to the problem is our preoccupation and now our identification of education as being a means of making a successful living. I would argue that the fundamental issue in education is not economic, it is almost spiritual. I wish to caution you. Do not misunderstand me. I am talking about this business of the pursuit of the unknown by the human intellect, the human being, as being an aesthetic experience. It is not mercenary in its base. It has to do with something more profound than that.

I am saying that whatever we do in the schools, we have that kind of basis, the purpose of lifting us up to be all the human we can be, and that includes compassion, understanding, forbearance, embracing one another's interests even though they are not ours and that sort of thing. They are what is missed now, because the major preoccupation in papers you read on education is

economic. It has to do with the fact that these kids are not going to compete with Japan and Korea.

When I read another statistic that suggests we are only average compared to Japan and Korea or Hong Kong, I ask, "Would you like us to turn the schools around and make them like they are in Hong Kong?" I am talking about your question. I am talking about it being a more fundamental, philosophical question. We can embrace a large number of things in our schools as long as we have that fundamental purpose.

Mr. Jackson: But where is that pressure coming from? I agree with you.

Mr. Dennis: It is partly from your wanting your son to be a doctor or a lawyer or from some other success syndrome in our culture.

Mr. Jackson: But are politicians in fact part of the problem? Well we are, I know we are. I am leading with this, but aside from the fact that we are constantly picking at a system because we cannot be hands off on something as critical as education, but I am concerned about the fact that we have the Japanese looking from their shores at our system, as you alluded to earlier, with a reference at one point to what I believe they called "splendid chaos." They referred to our system as a model to be admired, to be upheld, to be in fact revered. Yet we have a Premier who is sitting on our shores looking east and saying that is what we should be going toward.

As politicians, what kinds of messages are we giving? It is bad enough that we have the other messages from the culture that the youth may have been impacted upon.

Mr. Dennis: I wish my students to be as competent as this learning experience can make them, but I do not wish to be intimidated or frightened by an Asian culture, economic or philosophical. I have my own to satisfy and I take my tenet from our own democratic purpose, which is to help each one of these to be as individually capable as I can make them, devil take the hindmost.

That is a poor answer for you but I hope my principal does not announce a fright over the public address system today saying, "You have to catch Hong Kong by Christmas," because I cannot do it unless I change the whole thing.

Mr. Jackson: Their suicide rate is higher than ours, so I would not aspire to that system as much as people would lead us to believe it is to be revered. In the interests of time, I have to cut my questions off. I just wanted to personally thank you for putting us back into perspective. Your list, which you addressed in more general terms, at some point should be entered into the Hansard record. Your points clearly enunciated are good counsel to this body.

Madam Chairman: Perhaps, Mr. Dennis, at the end of the questioning, you could read your recommendations into Hansard. They are very brief and I think it would be worth while.

Mr. Keyes: I am going to be informal and speak about him as Lloyd, because I have had an opportunity to meet him on a number of occasions. My first request at the start of this committee was that we would start by listening to Lloyd and George, and then perhaps from what may have been looked at as two poles, we might come down through the middle into some type of consensus. However, that did not work but now it has in this morning's presentation. I appreciate that and perhaps it is a more appropriate time that we hear from these two individuals on these particular points.

I am going to leave my question circulating around the fact that we do have one of the best educational systems in the world, and how are we going to do a better marketing strategy for that, because my awareness is that we must be sure that the attention of the population, which is directed largely by the media, whether it be in print or as evidenced in all the media here today, whether it is in the television cameras that have been churning for the last hour and a half recording you, or the electronic Hansard in front of us, or the media to your left.

In society those pressures on teachers will be from a media point of view of probably reporting on that relationship between Bruce and Mary or perhaps between Lloyd and Mary or, heaven forbid, maybe Lloyd and Bruce or in the long run between Lloyd and Marilyn. These are the issues that will grasp the headlines in tomorrow's press, as opposed to the great things happening in the schools. What we really need to do, surely, in our slowing down of the pace of change, is to be sure we have a better marketing strategy for what we have in Ontario, and what are your suggestions.

Every teacher must be that marketing strategy and every trustee, I realize that, but perhaps you, in your many years of looking at this and speaking to thousands of audiences, can give us an insight. We have to have business and the religious communities and all of these parental groups involved. Perhaps one of the best things, of course, as I thought yesterday, listening to the education committee of the chamber of commerce that, following their presentation every time they would sit down, to pull out the TV cassette and either throw in 20-minutes of Lloyd

or 20 minutes of George, depending on their frame of mind for the day, but they could do that after today's presentation.

What would you suggest would be some of the more concrete marketing strategies that should be employed in the system?

1050

Mr. Dennis: One is to recognize how badly public relations is done by the local school and the local school boards across the province. It apparently is not considered to be one of their prime functions, and I think that is a very severe neglect.

Some schools and school systems do it rather well, and to get the concrete suggestion, one need go to a system that is doing it well and see by looking at it what its examples are. In the system to the east of us–I mentioned Bruce because I see him here this morning. He recently resigned as a director of education and got a standing ovation from his school board, a rather novel event in the present circumstance. One of the reasons is that he is very skilled and adept in enunciating what the purposes of his school system are and having them at least be appreciated by his clientele.

So I say it begins at the top in terms of the responsibility–in that case, the director of education–and by the school board itself consciously saying, "Let us have a facet of our facility devoted to the better understanding of what our purposes and our approaches are to education by the public." If that means putting machinery in place to do it, so be it. Let us insist that school principals not hide under stones when the heat is on but get out and help the public to understand and bring them into the schools to see for themselves what is being done in schools. I will guarantee that in most instances you will find a lot to be pleased about, and that is your best selling approach.

So what I am suggesting concretely is to accept consciously, as your role of a leader in education and as a trustee in education, your responsibility to enunciate and explain clearly to the public what is going on in your schools by one means or another, one strategy or another, depending on where you are. That is the first purpose of a leader in education, of course: to get people to understand what they are doing. There is less misinformation and less misunderstanding.

Mr. Keyes: That has happened with Bruce well and it has probably happened with the double bite out of the apple in East York and a few other we could mention. But perhaps much more of the impetus has to come right from the ministry itself so that it shows that it is one of the prime functions. I have sometimes felt that perhaps we are not doing as much there as we might to gain the attention of the public.

Mr. Dennis: It would be impertinent of me to suggest that a Minister of Education perhaps should consider as one of her or his responsibilities, as the first thing to do and a continuing thing to do, the enunciation of the purposes of education from the government itself. That does not mean you have to accept everything going on in the schools, but at least set up some kind of machinery that makes the people more aware of what is going on.

Mrs. O'Neill: It certainly is refreshing to see you again. I think the last time I saw you, you were doing something on affirmative action, which I found equally entertaining.

Mr. Dennis, I am very happy to say that 20 years later I think Living and Learning was the ideal title for that book. It is one of the few books that I have kept as almost a coffee-table book on education. I think the format you used and the people who were involved in that have made it still an outstanding contribution.

I would ask you to comment on something you said earlier and something that has happened since that document. There has been a great deal of emphasis, and I think some of it is attributed to the particular study that you were the co-leader of, on special education and remediation and a new emphasis on continuing education, because I think most of that which has taken place–and there is a great deal that has taken place over the last 20 years in those areas–began with a seed from the individualization that you challenged us with.

Earlier this morning, in one of the more flippant moments of the presentation, you said, "How long do I keep this person here and how tall does he have to be before he moves on?" I guess I would like you to try to be a little more explicit about that, because it is certainly one of the areas we are going to be having to look at. How long do you support a weakness when you know somebody has a lot of strength, or when do you ignore that weakness and say, "You must move on to another level of challenge or another way of doing things"? It is tied in with the dropouts, it is tied in with retention and I guess I would like you to be more serious than you were able to be in just that one remark, "How long do I keep this person in the classroom?"

Mr. Dennis: I think it is caught up with the question of what progress in learning is, anyway. I work from the premise that the student moves from the position of what he knows to what he

does not know. That progress is dependent to a great degree upon that student's ability.

I do not see it being as simple as saying, "You have to measure up to a certain uniform standard in all areas of your learning before you move on to another." That is why Living and Learning talked about being able to advance in one area while you are moving less slowly in another area because you are less able in that area.

That is why I would rather see a student leaving the school system at whatever point of departure with a description of the various levels of ability or accomplishments, irrespective of their being different. In other words, they are not uniform; therefore there is not one standard certification. The statement says where the student is at the time of departure. I would want the student to remain in the school area to learn as long as it is fruitful for that student to do so, even if the student is 20 years old and is continuing to learn.

I would like the decision about when the student departs to be made in counsel with the parent and the student and the school specialists who are best able to determine–that includes the person who has been monitoring the student's progress through the year–to the degree that we have an agreement that it would be more fruitful for this student to leave the school system now formally and perhaps seek employment or be assisted in seeking employment and attending school part-time while doing so, or to leave the school for a period of two or three years and return later as an adult for further education. I think it cannot be set as a standard, uniform application to all students in the province. It is an individual thing.

I am prepared for the student to stay with me at whatever age as long as that learning is still fruitful for the student and the student still is motivated to learn. The big key, I suppose the prerequisite, is the motivation of the student. If the student is desirous to stay and learn, and I say the student is applying himself as well as he is able, then he can stay with me for ever.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is your philosophy, then–and you are speaking as an individual teacher this morning–that you need those other human resources within the school community to help you do that?

Mr. Dennis: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: The resource centre, the remediation, the identification procedures–all of those things?

Mr. Dennis: Yes, and I certainly agree with the Radwanski statement that in order to help a student be retained as long as possible we have to clearly attach ourselves to that student in our interest and our attention on a continuing basis, so that when something is about to crack we are there to patch it if we can. Without that, of course, the student will slip and be gone and none of the sophisticated attempt to retain will be there.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you feel, as an individual teacher, that you have had the training to use these resources and the special education component of the school?

Mr. Dennis: No, I do not. I feel that when we introduced special education adjuncts to the secondary level we missed the point. Many of us who teach at the secondary school level are ill-prepared to handle some of the profound problems that come before us in Bill 82, for example.

I have a student with a learning disability and I was assigned that student in September. Now I am going to find out all I can about learning disabilities, which is a rather profound problem, and I am a little late because she has already been here since the beginning of September. So I was caught with a good intention on the part of the system to address that problem by not being prepared myself. I think we have to do a lot more. If we are going to do what I am suggesting and what Mr. Radwanski is suggesting, we are going to have to do more in preparing our teachers to handle this other aspect of retention.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I know that consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds, and I have never been concerned about that for myself, but I am wondering if there is not a contradiction that I would like you to clear up between how you responded to me and how you responded to Mr. Jackson.

To me you said there has to be increasing diversity of approach and, I would presume therefore, of program, and to him you said there has got to be a paring down of goals and expectations. Those things, on the face of it, seem to be in conflict; I am sure in your mind they are not.

Mr. Dennis: First, paring down your expectations: Do not expect I can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. That sounds a little flip, too, I realize, but I want you to know that it is not right of the public to expect that just by sending a student to school, that student can become whatever "success image" you want him to be. Pare it down to that degree; I cannot do that.

On being diverse, I think you should be as diverse as you can depending on the area of

Ontario in which you teach. All systems across Ontario should not be uniform. That is the point. In any one of those areas, do not put everything on its table that drops into the culture from drugs, to sex, to acquired immune deficiency syndrome and everything else, without expecting something to be pulled back. You might have to add new things but take away some of the traditionals.

1100

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Dennis. Perhaps you could read your Strategies for Change into the record. Members will find them on page 12, I believe.

Mr. Dennis: The last section of my submission before the addendum reads, Strategies for Change. Living and Learning and the Radwanski report had a common plea: that their contents be viewed as a whole and not be addressed piecemeal. Band-Aid approaches to improvement have been customary in educational change, often with disappointing results. Significant and productive improvement can be realized, not by sudden and superficial shifts, but through carefully developed strategies aimed at long-term, clearly established goals.

The following suggestions are offered for consideration:

1. Put in place an advisory council or some such body to act as a continuing policy adviser to the Legislature, similar in form and function to that recommended in Living and Learning. This would go a long way in providing a watchdog service in education, identifying anticipated needs and co-ordinating interests and demands. Such a council would also commission its own studies from time to time and thereby replace the traditional royal commissions and provincial committees.

2. Actively support the good work being done by schools through an ongoing program of public interest.

3. Objectively identify and make public the societal problems that lie at the root of much of our schools' problems.

4. Identify proposals which would lead to a co-ordinated approach to the education and moral development of young people, to the end that not only schools but also other sectors of society assume their appropriate responsibility.

5. Do not change what is not broken.

6. Use sophisticated methods to identify areas in need of revision, and only after teachers have had ample opportunity to prove that change is needed.

7. Manage the pace of change so that it does not have the effect of shock, exhaustion and rejection.

8. Make planning a high-priority item in ministry and school board competence.

Madam Chairman, thank you very much for inviting me. I enjoyed presenting to you this morning.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Dennis. We certainly enjoyed your presentation. Not only that, we found it extremely helpful. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for your contribution, not only to our committee but also to the education system in Ontario.

I think the committee is also anxiously awaiting the presentation that we are about to hear: George Radwanski. Come forward, please, Mr. Radwanski.

Mr. Radwanski: Good morning.

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to our committee. Mr. Radwanski, as well, is present on the invitation of the committee because we felt, with some of the recommendations he had made, his discussion had coincided with many of our committee mandates. Mr. Radwanski, welcome. Perhaps you could begin whenever you are settled and ready. I do not know if you want to make an opening statement before we have questions.

GEORGE RADWANSKI

Mr. Radwanski: I appreciate this opportunity to appear before the committee. I do not have a major presentation to make. I would think that my report can serve, really, as my submission to this committee. It might be useful to make just a few introductory remarks, then I will be delighted to get into questions and discussion, which I think will really be more useful than my making a speech.

As I am sure you know, I approached the task of the study not from the perspective of an expert in education because I, quite clearly, am not one, but from the perspective of an outsider who was asked by the Premier (Mr. Peterson) to look at our system of education, with emphasis on the issue of dropouts, but also much more broadly, and state my conclusions.

I must say that in the course of my work I was very surprised with what I found. Certainly, I was aware that we had a dropout problem. I was aware, as anyone is who reads the polls, that there was a certain degree of concern or dissatisfaction on the parts of parents, employers and so on with the education system as it

presently functions, but I really was quite surprised when I started getting in there and talking to educators, students, employers, researching the data, talking to people in the Ministry of Education and so on, by the degree to which I found a system of education that, on one hand, the professional educational establishment was insisting was the best of all possible worlds and was really fine, "Don't tinker with what works;" and on the other, the degree to which there were really enormous problems of clarity of purpose, by a gap between the stated intentions of our education system and, certainly, what parents, students themselves, employers and society at large was finding to be occurring in the schools.

I say in the report that my first revelation, if you will the eye-opener for me early in the work of my study, was when I put the following question to some of the most senior people in the field of education, teachers, principals and top people in the Ministry of Education: "If someone drops out of high school in grade 10, what will he or she not know or not be able to do that he or she would know or be able to do if that person stayed in school until completion of high school, until graduation from grade 12?"

This, to me, was a perfectly straightforward question, and the response almost unanimously was: "Oh, boy, you really don't know much about the system of education, do you? You can't ask that question. It all depends. It depends what level of study or stream the student is in. It depends what courses he or she happens to be taking. It depends what school board, indeed even what school, that student is in. You can't ask that question, because it has no straightforward answer."

If we cannot answer that question even fairly generally as to what the intended outcome in terms of knowledge and skills would be of two more years of schooling, how can we expect young people to accept or understand that there is a purpose, that it makes a difference? And how can they be persuaded that, in fact, our system has a clear-headed, rational purpose to it?

In the reaction to my report and the various recommendations, there are a few things which this might be a useful forum to comment on very briefly. One that I think needs to be commented on is this false dichotomy between serving the needs of business and developing the individual. A number of people have talked about my report in that context, among them, of course, Duncan Green from the Ministry of Education early on in the work of your study.

I was disappointed to hear that kind of a misperception, because I think a reading of the report would certainly make clear that what it recommends is not some kind of a narrow, feed-the-mills-of-industry kind of approach to education; quite the contrary. It recommends essentially that the focus of education in terms of what is taught and the necessary outcomes is the acquisition of knowledge and skills to prepare people for the workplace, of course, but also for participation in society at large, as citizens, as voters, as consumers, as people developing their own interests and abilities to participate fully in society.

Where I think there is some confusion is that I do not think it can be perceived as a dirty word, somehow right wing or regressive, to say that it is imperative that education, among the other things it does, be required to appropriately and fully prepare young people for today's workplace. We can talk all we want about individual development, self-fulfilment and all that other stuff, but a young person is not going to be very fulfilled or happy or feel well-developed if he or she cannot get decent employment and participate fully in today's knowledge-intensive economy.

Even more, I think the dichotomy is a false one because almost without exception what employers say they want, and what any study of the expectations of employers and so on will tell you they want, is not people narrowly skilled in this or that area, but in today's world, people with a good, well-rounded education, broadly developed knowledge, fundamental skills, obviously, but also general awareness and also the essential skills of knowing how to think clearly and how to learn effectively.

But you cannot have content-free thought and you cannot have effective learning except by learning even those things which do not come all that easily to the individual to learn.

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It is not a recommendation for "back to basics" as some have tried to characterize it. It is an emphasis on all the fundamentals, which include the humanities as well as basic skills. It includes knowledge of science, obviously, but it also includes history, the workings of our society, citizenship, if you will; it includes geography; it includes the arts–what historically has been regarded as a good, well-rounded education.

Where the important difference comes in between current practice and what the report identifies as necessary is a clarity of intended outcomes rather than merely talking about the

process. By that, I mean an emphasis on the acquisition of specific and demonstrable knowledge and skills in the various areas we identify as necessary.

There is a very real danger in the kind of generalized and vague emphasis on individual fulfilment, the kind of approach Mr. Dennis, for instance, emphasizes: develop each child to the maximum of his or her abilities. Fine. Who could disagree with that statement? But the danger of it, if that is all we say, is that if the child is not learning much or is not developing as one might wish, that approach says almost by definition, "Well, this child has developed to the level of his or her abilities." If the child is not learning, it means he or she lacks the ability or lacks the inclination. "What can we do? We've done our bit."

That is not good enough. It is not good enough in today's world and it is not good enough if you look at the data that show the remarkable correlation between socioeconomic status, income level, household background and so on and academic performance, up to and including streaming and the dropout rate and so forth, unless one accepts the premise that to be poor is to be stupid and I certainly do not accept that for a moment.

We have to confront the reality that our current approaches that say, "Let each child develop at his or her own pace and give them a million opportunities but don't put too much focus on outcomes," have the effect, really, of relegating those who start with a disadvantage to remain disadvantaged, because the assumption is made that they lack the abilities and it would be wrong to somehow press them. That is something that strikes me as entirely inappropriate.

The second broad area that I think merits some brief comment is this whole issue of testing, the whole argument about the dangers of learning by rote and so forth that one hears. With regard both to testing and to restoring some kind of structure and clarity of purpose, one would really think, to read some of the comments and reactions, that I was suggesting conscripting kids into some kind of little army at age 7, regimenting them, giving them no freedom, no flexibility, and just force-feeding them through the system.

That is not the reality at all. When one talks about testing not as a kind of summative experience at the end of the education process, but as something that goes on regularly throughout the school life of a child to identify whether he or she is making sufficient progress in essential content areas or whether some additional help, tutoring, remediation is needed, that does not in any way stunt creativity or development, nor, if it is done intelligently, is it the equivalent of teaching by rote or teaching the test.

A child either can read and comprehend a passage of a certain level of complexity or he or she cannot. No amount of teaching by rote in the pejorative sense or teaching the exam is going to accomplish that. It is possible to devise tests of reading ability that simply tell you whether the child is reading at an age-appropriate level or a grade-appropriate level.

A child can write sentences of a certain level of grammatical complexity and correctness at a certain point or he or she cannot. That is not rote learning. He or she can perform a given mathematical operation or not. That is not rote learning. He or she either knows some basic facts of history or geography or what have you or not. We can argue that is rote learning, but one cannot have fact-free thought or creativity or anything else. There are some things, yes, that need to be learned, because without them one cannot have a basis for broader thought.

When people talk so pejoratively about testing as somehow stifling creativity and so forth, I am left with the paradox that a great many private schools, including, right here in Ontario, some of the most highly regarded ones, have regular exams and tests once, even twice a year, and those are not schools based on the performance of their students or the perceptions of their teaching methods that would be described as places that regiment students or stifle creative thought or what have you.

In fact, I was struck in the course of my work by the rather high incidence of teachers who send their children to private schools that have some of these very features, even though one hears about how any attempt to focus on outcomes in the schools would somehow regiment everybody and stifle everybody. I have trouble buying that and I have to ask whether to some degree, when that argument is made, it is not self-serving, whether it is not a fear of a certain type of accountability, a concern that with a clear kind of standard of performance or nonperformance, others, including parents, might say to the teacher: "Look, it is clear that my child is not doing well enough in this or that subject. What are you going to do about it?"

One has to ask with regard to some of the responses to this point and others from the teachers' federations–perhaps this is the appropriate forum to raise the question–in which

instances those teachers' federations are speaking as pedagogical experts primarily focused on the wellbeing of students and in which instances they are speaking as a labour union defending what they perceive to be the best interests of their members.

The message has a tendency to get mixed, and there is a danger at times that even the public may be confused in regarding what is said by some of these groups in the guise of pedagogical expertise, not recognizing that it may be a perfectly legitimate expression of syndical self-interest, which is fine, but should not be mistaken as anything but that.

That is really all I think needs to be said at this point by way of a general introduction, other than perhaps to remark that in passing, in response to some of the things Mr. Dennis was saying, I heard someone up here remark on looking for a middle ground, that perhaps there is a middle ground between the Dennis approach and the Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts.

Maybe there is, but I would express a worry that the history of education in Ontario, certainly for the last 20 years or so, has been a constant search for a middle ground, a constant attempt to compromise, to come up with half-measures that will not upset any of the interests and pressure groups too much, that will accomplish some things but not go too far.

Perhaps that is rooted in an unwillingness to recognize that ultimately education belongs to all of us, not to the special interest groups, and that there is a legitimate role for government, on our behalf, as a controller of that education system in saying, "Here is what needs to be done and here are the parameters."

There is a danger of constant half-hearted compromises that not only end up not entirely pleasing anyone, perhaps, but more important end up not meeting the real needs for which the education system exits which is to provide the fullest possible education for all our young people; compromises that do it in a way that ends up giving a real education, the kind most of us would consider an optimal education for our children, to those 50 per cent of young people who end up successfully completing the advanced stream of study, and gives what really is a make-believe education, a second best–"Here is what we can teach them without too much difficulty"–to the other half who unfortunately also happen to coincide with the lower half demographically in terms of household income and the degree of opportunity from which their own background begins.

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That is really all I would like to say by way of a brief opening statement. I perhaps talked a little longer than I expected I would, but I would be delighted now to get into answering your questions.

Madam Chairman: We will start off with Mr. Johnston, followed by Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the introductory remarks. I am one of those people who found your report very troubling, in good and bad ways. I was delighted with your attack on what I see as one of the major failures of the system, and that is the way kids in lower socioeconomic units are dealt with in the school system. I was really pleased about that emphasis, but I kept running into problems with your solutions.

I want to try to deal with these a little bit, if I might. First, may I get you to respond to something Mr. Dennis said this morning about dropouts. I have some problems with the way the statistics are developed, as I think you do, and the lack of a real statistical base you had to work from, from the Ontario scene specifically.

He made the point this morning that has been raised a number of times before the committee that although we can look at rates of 30 per cent averages or above dropping out of the general stream, and we can look at much, much higher percentages for people coming out of the basic stream and dropping out of the system, some areas of the province seem to report much lower dropout rates.

For instance, when we were in Ottawa–members who were there can correct me–I believe the Carleton Board of Education told us it had a dropout rate of less than five per cent.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think it is around 10 per cent.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Around 10? I thought they said five. Maybe I am wrong, but it is much lower than the provincial average. They even indicated there were some at eight or nine per cent, so I think it was around five they were talking about, but I may be incorrect. Even 10 per cent is dramatically below what you are talking about.

Mr. Jackson: It was one school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It was one school? In fact, it was the basic-level schools, as I recall, which is also a bit stunning.

What is your response to that kind of notion that, in fact, when you look at the overall system

and then you attack it structurally, as you have, to say to get rid of streaming, etc., in certain parts of the province, seemingly, outcomes are different from those in other parts of the province, specifically in terms of the dropout rate.

Mr. Radwanski: It is a very good question. I must say we have an interesting paradox here. When I look at the data, and I approached it in the report, as you know, from three separate vantage points, all of it shows a dropout rate in the 30 per cent range. We can quibble about a few percentage points. Perhaps the most telling is census data stuff that indicates that at age 22, about 30 per cent of people in Ontario have not completed school and are not in school and are probably not imminently about to go back. So I am comfortable with that 30 per cent figure province-wide.

Then you run into the paradox–I have encountered this in response to speaking invitations across the province and so on–that we have a 30 per cent dropout rate provincially, but no part of the province admits to having a substantial dropout rate: "Well, they're dropping out somewhere, and gee, it's not in Ottawa. It doesn't seem to be in Toronto. It's maybe not in northern Ontario and it's not in western Ontario."

Either there is an area somewhere that has a 100 per cent dropout rate that we have not stumbled on yet that is skewing all the numbers, or people are less than candid or less than effective in computing what is going on in their own school boards. That is really where I am left.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You do advocate a better tracking system than we have at the moment, in terms of what is happening in the study of that?

Mr. Radwanski: I think it is essential, but if you go into any school, talk to the students in grade 12 and ask them how many of the people they knew when they started in grade 9 have dropped out, you are going to hear something pretty close to one third.

The other point I would make is about these numerical battles about, "Is the dropout rate 30 per cent or 20 per cent?" Say it is 20 per cent. I do not accept that for a moment, but say it is. Is that good enough? Would we do anything differently? I would not. I am concerned about the dropout rate, but I think it is important to emphasize that I am vastly more concerned, in a sense, about what happens long before they drop out and the degree to which even the students who complete school, if they are in those two lower streams–even some advanced students–have been hoaxed in the sense that they are graduating really lacking in what one would consider a meaningful education in terms of the knowledge and the skills they possess.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We are just getting our latest census data. In a little breakout I was able to do of some of those figures yesterday, it looked as if for people 25 to 45, the percentage seemed to around 30 per cent that did not complete their high school education. In some areas of the province, it is as high as 36 or 37 per cent.

If I could move to another matter, which I also think may be a false dichotomy that has built up, especially in terms of response to Living and Learning, it is the notion of the outcomes-versus-process dichotomy, which you posed fairly dramatically. I am very anxious that we change our goals and I would like your perspective in terms of the vagueness of those goals. Specifically, when you are putting it in a socioeconomic context, we in fact have no objective goals for what we want the education system to do for groups of people–it is all this individual space–although you do not posit that, but from my perspective that is important.

From your perspective, I want some clarification, because I do not understand why you think, as you assert, that the move to an outcomes judgement, by standardized testing and such, would be better for working-class kids. It strikes me that the more flexible process-oriented approach or emphasis–I will put it like that because I do not think they are distinct–would be more likely to help a kid stay in school than going back to what we had in the 1950s, when we can certainly see even more dramatically what happened to working-class kids in those days. I would like to hear why you think a stricter outcomes-oriented approach is going to be beneficial to the education of the working-class kid.

Mr. Radwanski: Fine. I have two points on that. First, I think it is useful to clarify, because it has come up in a few instances, the definition of process that I am talking about. It seems that process is used in several ways in the educational community and perhaps I was not clear enough in the report on this point.

Some educators talk of process as process on the part of the student; in other words, learning to learn and learning to think clearly and all that. That I regard as absolutely essential and in fact it is among the essential content areas I identified.

When I say moving away from emphasis on process, I mean moving away from emphasis on how you teach. The directives that come out of the Ministry of Education tend to be so much

more on the pedagogical process than on where the student is supposed to be at the end of the road. That is what troubles me.

When you ask how it will help the less advantaged student, it is in the following way. Let me back up a step. Either we agree that there are certain things the individual needs to know and needs to be able to do by the time of completion of education in order to be able to participate fully in society, both in the workplace and as a voter, etc., or not. If not, if we agree that it does not matter, and there really is not much you need to know and you are fine if you know a lot of one thing and nothing of another and so on, then disregard my recommendations because they are unfounded.

But if we agree that there are certain essential things we need to know and be able to do–I suggest a list of a dozen which I will not rehash here–if that is true, then students from less advantaged backgrounds are ill-served by a process, by an approach to education that does not emphasize getting every student to be in full or at least reasonable command of that knowledge and of those skills.

When we let it be diffused and say that each student should do what feels good or develop in his or her own way, it becomes a very comfortable excuse–for instance, you go right back to elementary school and start off with ability groupings, literally in grade 1, in key subjects like reading and math–and you end up saying: "Well, Johnny isn't really reading very well. He's behind. He's slower. Let's not press him. Let's not affect his self-esteem. We will put him in this group with these other children who are also a little slower." Chances are, Johnny is from a less advantaged household where the parents use less enriched vocabulary, read less to him, etc., but set that aside. There is Johnny in the low-ability group.

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And then the process moves on. They are reading and working at this level down here, the others are working at that level up there and the disparities do not disappear. They just stay and extend all through, and the assumption is made that if Johnny is doing okay in other subjects or he is good at art or he really enjoys math, that is developing his abilities and he obviously was not meant to be a strong reader. I could apply the same to writing or math or almost anything else.

Then that child ends up at the end of the process deficient in a key area, streamed into a lower stream, because what else are you going to do with a kid in high school who cannot read properly or cannot handle simple math or cannot write a coherent sentence? The rest is history.

We should say instead, "Look, here is what a child should be able to do by grade 3 in reading," in math or whatever else it may be. If a child is not at that standard, we should not say, "Oh, well, it wasn't meant to be." Do not say, "He is just slow; it will come later," because it tends not to come later if he is passed from hand to hand and nobody is responsible. Say: "What does that child need? Does that child need more tutoring? Does he need a different teaching method?"

Whatever it may be, unless the demonstration exists that the child is disabled, whether it is learning-disabled, retarded or whatever else, diagnosably, in some very specific way incapable of being taught that subject matter at that point, let's throw the resources into getting that child to that level of knowledge and skills at that point. If we do not, it just blurs, it goes on for ever and nobody is ever responsible at this point, this year, for bringing that child to this level of performance in that subject.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just think we are talking at cross-purposes theoretically, even here. Under the present system, the notion of the ability grouping within a heterogeneous class–and I would make a great distinction between that and the notion of streaming people by school or by basic levels in composite schools, etc.–is recognizing the very major differences in development. For instance, a grade 1 class may be class-based, as you say, and it also may be based on the fact that one child was born in January, the other child was born in September and their development is, as somebody put it, 20 per cent different in terms of just their physical maturity.

I think the notion is that they try to remediate within the class system, and that is what the groupings are within the class system. You seem to say that, to take the arbitrary grade 3 level that you just talked about, at that point you make a judgement on them. You were even talking then about summer school remediation for those kids, which I would consider to be very punitive and also stigmatizing for those kids at that time. I am not sure that is not a very regressive kind of notion in education, given all the theory that is out there in terms of what the effects of retaining somebody or separating him out in that sense are to him.

Mr. Radwanski: Well, we differ. Let me pick up on your last point first, about remediation, summer school, whatever, being punitive or stigmatizing. What is punitive and what is stigmatizing is when a child, a young person,

finds himself in high school reading at grade 5 level, or not able to write a grammatical sentence, or not knowing essential elements of a subject that he or she will then have to deal with, because he or she was passed from hand to hand and year to year for fear of being stigmatized.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is surely no more of a stigma than the kid I remember in the rural class that I was in who was 16 years of age in grade 6 with me. Surely that was as stigmatizing, being held back that way.

Mr. Radwanski: I am not suggesting that. Let's be clear: I am not suggesting that for a moment, nor am I even saying that holding back, as such, is the answer, except as a last resort. I am saying that we must start with a premise, first of all; and here there is some substantial difference, there is a subtext here that I think is important to talk about. Either we start with the premise that the overwhelming majority of children can learn the fundamentals that we regard as necessary subject matter, including certainly the fundamentals of reading, writing coherently, numeracy and so forth, from which then flow learning to learn and being able to assimilate certain facts and so on, or we do not.

If we start with the assumption that only about half or a little more than half of young people can learn fully and properly, then everything else I say becomes punitive and somehow cruel, but I do not think pedagogical evidence sustains that view. If that is not the case, then we are doing those children who do not learn initially as quickly or who start with some sort of disadvantage no favour by simply saying, "Oh, well, it'll come later," and it does not. Where the crunch comes in is that it is very easy any given year to say: "This child is just a little behind in his or her development. It'll come later."

If you go out and talk to the parents and they say, "I was really worried about my child's reading ability or writing ability," or whatnot, and the teachers keep saying, "Don't worry. Don't push him too much; he is just a little behind. It is all a matter of different children developing at different ages," and two years later they go back and raise the same concern, "Well, there is no absolute point at which a child should be able to do this or that; don't worry," bingo: The kid is in high school, miles behind, streamed into a lower stream, disillusioned, bored, never learning, because there was never a moment, there was never a sort of checkpoint where somebody said, "Okay, unless this kid has a real, insurmountable problem, now is the time to throw in whatever effort is necessary to bring that child that ability."

Holding back, as such, is not the answer. I do not agree that after-school tutoring or remediation or even a summer program is stigmatizing or punitive. If you look at even the Hall-Dennis doctrine and Lloyd Dennis's views, what they keep repeating is that children love learning, children want to learn. One accepts that premise. I think they do, up to a certain point. Then it is not punitive and it is not penalizing a child to say, "Look, you need some more help, and we are going to give it to you." It is more punitive to let the child flounder.

Holding them back is a very last resort and simply making a child repeat a grade–that is where the data get maybe a little misleading. If a child has not done well with a certain teacher, a certain teaching style and certain circumstances in grade 4, then having that child repeat grade 4 with that teacher in those circumstances and those teaching styles probably is not going to produce a dramatically better result the second time, and it will be stigmatizing. But first one would want to try remediation, not only at the end of the year but all through that year, to head off the problem before it happens; then a summer program, if need be. Then if you have to hold the child back, you do not just dump the child back in the same kind of classroom environment. Repeating a year should be in some kind of focused remedial setting where the purpose is to focus on whatever reasons or problems stood in the way of that child learning that material and changing, affecting that problem.

I have to keep coming back to the recognition that in the elementary schools in Ontario we are not teaching nuclear physics. It is not subject matter that should be beyond the reach of most children if the appropriate level of expert effort is extended, if we find the teaching method that suits the needs of that particular child and so forth. That is really where I come down on it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will pass this on to other members, but I agree with the notion you are talking about in terms of the ability to learn. I also agree with the notion of active remediation, but I see it much more within the concept of the heterogeneous class than the other kinds of notions of retaining. I think all the statistics are very clear that most methods of holding a child back tend to have negative impacts on their education later on. As an ultimate weapon, even. I mean, North York–

Mr. Radwanski: Let me be clear: I do not want to be painted into the role of an advocate of

holding children back. I am not at all persuaded that, of itself, it is answer. I am much more concerned about remediation, tutoring and so on during the year. If you had an objective-oriented teaching approach, whether you want to call it mastery learning or anything else, where you say, "This is what they should learn, and then they should learn this and then that in a structured, sequential way," that involves not only fancy exams at the end of the year, which of themselves are not that useful–it is just that that is the only thing there is–but a great deal of informal, constant testing, feedback and monitoring against the outcomes you are trying to achieve. That is when you start identifying problems and saying, "This child needs more attention than is available in the normal class day," whether it means being out of class for additional remediation on that subject; or something after school, some tutoring–we do not see a whole lot of tutoring these days unless parents decide to invest in it themselves, if they can afford it–or maybe it means a Saturday program; maybe it will mean a summer program. Holding back is not an answer as such.

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There may be instances where, for a child to be held back a year, not simply dumped back in the classroom but into a real remedial setting where, let's say, almost all the emphasis that year, if the problem were reading– Maybe holding back the child a year and focusing predominantly on the child's reading that year might accomplish something. Maybe, if the problem is numeracy, holding the child back and focusing predominantly on that for a year might accomplish something.

We have to use all the means at our disposal to get the child from here to there, but I do not want to be painted as someone who is saying, "If they don't know the stuff, flunk them and hold them there until they are 15." That is just plain silly and is no answer.

Mrs. O'Neill: You say you have trouble with people identifying themselves as those who are holding back or who have a 30 per cent dropout rate, that you do not know where those people are and that they are there somewhere. I have a lot of trouble with your statements, two of which you made this morning: "There is never a checkpoint," and "No one is ever responsible." I am going to ask you some questions, but I would like to say some things before I do that, centred on those points.

The reason I have difficulty is that I have been in schools constantly and consistently for 15 years and I can find no basis for the two statements in my experience. Schools have early identification projects. As far as I know, generally in this province the teacher of the junior kindergarten goes into the home and interviews the student and the parent; at least, that is the experience I have and that is where it starts.

There are speech therapists; there are language consultants; there are resource teachers; there are business people who come even into the elementary school to offer their services; there are volunteers who consistently work with the speech pathologist from the hospital often; there are all kinds of health care services, whether they be mental or physical health care services, within the school system; there is summer school and has been, in my history, as long as I can remember, 20 years, for people who have been falling behind, and in some cases for people who want to reach ahead; there is peer tutoring, often with handicapped children and with the mentally disabled but also peer tutoring regarding social experiences the young people have.

All of those are things I think you are suggesting. You also suggest co-operative education in your document, and we now have 45,000 students in this province participating in co-operative education. This program has been growing, and is there and there are advisory committees on many school boards in many areas. Some school boards have, in my humble opinion, far too many advisory committees. One school board in this province has more than 30 advisory committees. I think that is too many.

I just have a lot of trouble when you say there is never a checkpoint, because there are certainly the standards, the Canadian basic skills, administered across this province; there are now provincial reviews taking place, a pilot project now across this system in grade 6 for reading and math.

When you say no one is responsible, I do not think the school system has ever had as many people involved in it from every level, whether that be from the input of the social service programs, the resource people who are hired by school boards or the teachers and the kinds of professional development and training they are getting.

I am not saying the problems are solved, and I do agree with your statistic that one third of the students do not get a graduation diploma in their first shot. But I really am very sorry that you overlooked all of these things that go on in the schools, and I cannot believe that you did not see

some of them if you entered some of the portals I have crossed.

So I would like you to explain to us what you mean by "half empty" from your document and by what you said this morning, "half-measures." I would like you to be very specific.

Mr. Radwanski: To be very specific I would have to read you a 200-page report which I think touched in detail on all those points.

Mrs. O'Neill: Well, specific examples.

Mr. Radwanski: I will be happy to answer the points you raised this morning, in any event.

When you speak of early identification, it goes back to what I was saying to Richard Johnston earlier, and I did not put it quite that way. If a child is identified early on as having a specific disability–learning-disabled, whatever–with early identification he or she will get attention. Terrific. We have those programs. In a sense, that is the lucky child. For the child who falls between the cracks–and there are enormous numbers of them–the one who is simply perceived as being a little behind, a little slow or, "Oh, well, he is not all that good at this yet, but it will come," in that area the tendency, because of the belief in letting children develop at their own pace, so-called, is simply that in passing that child from hand to hand, from year to year, without there being a clear checkpoint in terms of what that child should know that year–you may argue with me that we have all these mechanisms and checkpoints; the reality is that if you ask a teacher, as I did on many occasions and as parents told me they had done–

You should see some of the letters I have been getting since the report came out, saying: "Thank God someone finally said this. I have fought this battle with my child's teachers for 10 years and got nowhere." Perhaps I should have brought some of them in and entered them in evidence, although they are directed at me, so that would not be right.

Mrs. O'Neill: We have had some of the responses, and they say some of the same things.

Mr. Radwanski: Okay, but if you ask a grade 5 teacher, "What should a child in your class be able to read? Tell me what level of reading ability, demonstrably, he or she should have?" Or if you look at an assignment and you say, "This is full of misspellings, gobbledegook and so on and simple words. Should that fellow be able to do better at this point?" The degree to which the answer is, "Well, you cannot say that. It depends, some develop faster, some develop more slowly," means there are no meaningful checkpoints in terms of identifying a child who would do better if he or she had more attention.

Mrs. O'Neill: Did you not find one board that had introduced its own standardized testing?

Mr. Radwanski: I did not examine in detail what was going on in every board province-wide. My timing and my resources, my mandate, did not permit me to do that kind of board-by-board examination. Certainly some testing exists and some teachers even administer tests and so forth. Also, I think it is important to be clear that one would not want to suggest that some very good practices do not exist in some schools or even in some boards.

But I am talking province-wide. Standards vary dramatically not only from school to school and board to board but from teacher to teacher. One teacher will tell you that a certain level of knowledge or performance in a given subject is really all you can expect at this grade level; another has more demanding expectations or standards. It is really a tower of Babel. You know, you talk to people or you read letters from people whose child went to one school and thought he or she was doing fine, moved to another school and it turned out the kid was miles behind in terms of the subject matter in the same grade, or vice versa.

There simply is no meaningful frame of reference whereby a teacher can know, or even an older child can know, whether this child is doing well enough in these subjects or whether some kind of help is needed. I am sorry. Despite all those fine mechanisms and institutions and everything you describe as existing in the schools, it is absolute fact that if my child were in that kind of circumstance and I were concerned, there would be nothing I could point to and say: "Well, I do not think he is doing well enough, and here is a benchmark against which I am saying that I am concerned. What are you, the school, going to do about it?"

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Mrs. O'Neill: At what levels–and I do not think you were terribly specific; particularly elementary now–would you want that standardized testing?

Mr. Radwanski: At regular intervals. I was not totally specific in the sense that whether it is done at three-year intervals or at two-year intervals or whatever it might be. It is really a pedagogical question for the experts to determine.

I would want them at frequent enough intervals that real shortfalls in essential subject

areas would be clearly identifiable in time to do something about them. The purpose is not punitive. The purpose is to identify a benchmark for every child and if there is problem, ask then and there: "Right, what are we going to do about it? How will we help this child?"

All the kind of sampling that is being talked about now as a solution–you know, we sample a batch of kids at various grade levels and see how well they are doing–that is nothing. That is, if anything, a political kind of compromise. I can tell you right now what it will say. It will say that a certain proportion of children are doing fine, a certain proportion of children are doing so-so and a certain proportion of children are not doing nearly well enough and, gee, is that not disturbing.

What it will not do is tell the parent, the teacher and the child in each individual instance how that child is doing in a way that you can do something about it. Sample testing is not going to produce anything that you can do something about. It can produce only a platitude along the lines of, "Gee, if X per cent of students did not do well enough on this test of reading or geography, we really have to do something to teach that better." That is not an answer. The answer is to be able to know how each child is doing against whatever criterion we decide is the desirable point for that child to be at.

Mrs. O'Neill: I could continue but I think I had better pass.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. O'Neill, wisdom being the better part of valour.

Mr. Jackson: I too read your report with 35 recommendations. I saw some that I felt were appropriate and was pleased and others that quite frankly angered me because I had thought that you had been handed a great opportunity by the Premier to help focus more in the area of solutions on the issue of dropouts.

In the short time I have I would like to focus on some questions about what was not in your report, because I find that very important. For example, in recommendation 35, just to illustrate the point, you talked about the legal school-leaving age not being modified. Yet any serious examination of dropouts, even Ken Dryden's report, focused in on students who are predisposed for dropping out. We can clearly identify them.

We did not get a lot of that from your report. You saw it as the process leading to a predisposition, but clearly we can identify students. We in this province routinely, annually, allow 14- and 15-year-old students legally to get out of school early under the supervised alternative learning for excused pupils programs, formerly known as early school leaving.

I consider it immoral that the province still transfers large dollars to those boards for those students when those students are out somewhere, where they say, "As long as they are out of my school, I am happy." That was a pervasive attitude a decade ago and there are still vestiges of it.

Why did you not clearly focus in on that area, even just for the sake of the many children in this province whose life experiences are so awkward that all the best teaching, all the loving and caring teaching, all the standardized tests in the world are not going to overcome a system's understanding of that person's need? That is a general question about why you did not deal with the predisposed dropouts and deal with those needs and not just refer to it in the general mentoring sense, which is one of your positive recommendations.

Mr. Radwanski: I am not sure I agree with or accept the terminology of the predisposed dropout, except in the sense that I addressed it in the report. By this I mean that obviously children from troubled or disadvantaged and so on backgrounds have a higher tendency to drop out.

That is not a predisposition in the sense of being either genetic or immutable. What happens that leads to dropping out is the interaction between that child and the school system. That is why it is the process of the school, it is the degree to which the interactions of the school reinforce the problems, in a sense, and do not give the child the opportunity to catch up pedagogically to overcome the disadvantage and also do not give the child the emotional support and the positive reinforcement that might offset the stuff that goes on in the home or that fails to go on in the home.

When you look at the data, whether it be focus groups and discussions I sat in on with the dropouts or the stuff I had Decima and Goldfarb do–separately, which came to the same conclusions–the big, big factor with dropouts was not inability to handle the academic program as such. In fact, there is quite good evidence that a lot of them might have been able to handle it. It is a perception that no one cared.

To say there is a child who is predisposed to drop out in a sense that is distinct from what the school does or fails to do to for that child, I do not accept. I do not think that is the the case. I think we could address a whole lot of it. When you say I could have devoted more attention in my report to what we could do to keep kids from dropping

out, I think I did. I think the point I was trying to make–

Mr. Jackson: Let me be very clear. I did not say you did not address that. I was trying to be specific on the issue of predisposed students, whether they are children's aid society wards or whatever. I speak with 15 years of experience in the public school system and having chaired early school leaving, gone through the gut-wrenching turmoil of that for 10 years. I am simply saying that you could have looked more specifically at the matters for those at-risk students other than academic performance.

One gets a clear sense that your solution is some adjoining mentoring alongside a more rigid standardizing, of a lockstep approach at the very point in their life when they need less rigidity and less pressure but more of the understanding of the system; as well, linkages out of the system and back into the system and those matters. I felt that was not really fully addressed in the recommendation section and, therefore, was given little attention in the editorial part of your report. That was my point. I am not saying you did not address dropouts. I am saying there are sections of dropouts.

The other one I will introduce to you now. We heard a statistic last week that age appropriateness–it gets back to Mrs. O'Neill's point about your concern about checkpoints; I will get back to that in a moment. But at the checkpoint, the transition from elementary to secondary school, there is compelling evidence of the difference between a student starting high school at age 13 and a student starting high school at age 14. There is a significant contribution to drop out if students start high school at an older age. That is a piece of empirical evidence.

Then we add to that the fact that one of your solutions would be to, as a last resort–you have clarified that–hold back a student. In fact, that in a way contributes to an older-age student who eventually gets to high school. I will come back to checkpoints in a moment but I am trying to focus on these predisposed dropouts and their treatment by you in the report.

Mr. Radwanski: First, let me come back to words you used like "rigidity" and "lockstep."

Mr. Jackson: Do not be so defensive.

Mr. Radwanski: I am not being defensive at all. I am trying to answer your question, if I can. If one starts off with the premise that what these kinds of approaches entail is "rigidity" and "lockstep," obviously one is going to come to the conclusion that rigidity and lockstep are not the way to help troubled young people to thrive in the system.

Without being defensive, I have to tell you that I do not believe that what the report recommends is rigidity or lockstep in that sense; it recommends individual attention and it recommends instilling a clarity of purpose that the young people themselves can understand. To the degree to which young people, particularly in the lower two streams, end up saying, "Look, this is all a lot of bull. I don't understand what the point of all this is. I know this is make-work and I know nobody expects me to do anything much. I have been relegated in with the dummies and I'm bored," when you have that lack of clarity of purpose, that can be even more alienating for these troubled young people.

Mr. Jackson: Well–

Mr. Radwanski: Well, okay. We disagree.

Mr. Jackson: We disagree. You are describing that as the mindset of the average student in this province whether he is at risk or not. As one who has eight younger brothers and sisters who have gone through a system in its transitions with the Lloyd Dennis years, I can tell you that you are not describing accurately what all goes on in the minds of some of those students.

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Mr. Radwanski: In the lower streams, I would say an awful lot of that goes on.

To come back to your point about older age, for a moment, the ones who start high school at different ages, I would only comment that one has to be a little bit careful about what those statistics or any statistics show.

You have to ask: If a student is entering high school a year later, what is that a proxy for? Is that simply a proxy for having been held back a year or is that a proxy for a student who has had all sorts of difficulties in the academic system to that point who, let's say is arriving in high school not just a year older but still with a serious deficit, let's say in reading skills, in writing skills or what have you? It may be that that age 14 is a proxy for the fact that rather than the fact of having been held back a year there is a real problem. I think one has to be very careful how one interprets the statistics.

Mr. Jackson: Can I move to another area, please? I was shocked by your statement about "never a checkpoint." Some have described your suggestion as teacher-proof teaching, that you do an examination each year to provide certain warranties and understandings of a student's expectations and performance. I had hoped,

perhaps, that in your report you would have recognized more clearly benchmarks at various division levels or the critical transition from elementary to secondary school and the way we structure our schools. I guess it is fair for me to say that your report was very sweeping and less specific on the transition points.

Yet, when you analyse your recommendations at primary and junior, which is an extremely important area of education, I get into difficulty with the underpinnings of your approach to at what point we start children and if you do not agree with ability grouping in grade 1, how the hell are you going to do it when you take them three years earlier? I have introduced a lot of issues but I find some contradictions in that.

Mr. Radwanski: I do not think, quite honestly, that there are any. That is not much of an answer, but–

Mr. Jackson: We disagree on a lot of things, don't we?

Mr. Radwanski: I would have thought that a report like this would command unanimous agreement. I am really surprised. Let the record note that I said that facetiously, please.

To come back to your point, for instance, about checkpoints and benchmarks, I do not say it should be every year. In fact, I explicitly say at appropriate intervals throughout the years of schooling and I mean at every two or three years.

Why not simply a checkpoint, let's say, at the point of the transition between elementary school and high school? Very simply because by then it is too late to do anything about it. The point is not simply to have a summative test that says "Congratulations, you have passed," or "Tough luck, you fail; now I want you to go back and redo seven years of grade school." The point is, throughout the school life of a child to have a clear-cut frame of reference to make it obvious whether that child needs additional help then and there or not. The subjectivity that is involved in this, at this point, is just horrendous.

It is really the luck of the draw. It depends on the school. It depends on the teachers and the amount of school shopping that goes on–you would know, I am sure you have heard it in this committee–among, at least, sophisticated parents trying to find a school whose standards are high, meaningful and so forth versus one that may not be. It is really quite striking and we need to get away from that so that people can know what their child is or is not learning, at a time early enough to be able to do something about it.

Mr. Jackson: I will try to make my last two questions very brief. I have a concern with respect to your nonreference to semestering in your report. You address credits, not the issue of semestering, but you do talk about summer school remediation.

I understand, from listening to you today, there is a heavy emphasis at the elementary. However, you also implied secondary, and I am concerned at how we would structure, given that a lot of schools in Ontario are now semestered. How do we expect a student to enrol in September, finish a semester in February, be at risk, having been given remediation, but not be allowed to progress forward with that English program, or whatever, until he waits for the next semester to pass, and then attends summer school? How do you envisage that, or do you have any concerns about semestering? I really did not get much of that in your report.

Mr. Radwanski: No. A simple answer to any of the questions about why this or that other thing was not in my report is that with a one-year time frame, maximum, to report, fairly limited resources and a huge subject matter, I really had to pick my spots and end up focusing on the things that in the final report I was clear on and the things that I felt I knew enough about.

With regard to semestering, I honestly do not know if it is a good thing or not. I have heard very mixed reactions to it. I have heard some suggestions, which I do not discount, that it may be part of the problem rather than part of the solution. If semestering stands in the way of the necessary kind of mentoring, tutoring, remediation and actually enabling students to learn that which they need to know, if it ever comes to that kind of choice, then I will certainly say: "Do away with the semestering. Don't do away with giving students the help and the outcomes they need." But I do not really have an opinion whether semestering is good or bad.

Mr. Jackson: In fairness to you, you had the same problem with your report that we are now having with our mandate. If you have seen the mandate of this committee, it is incredibly broadly based. I have referred, facetiously, to our four-year time frame and I am convinced that is the only way we are going to do justice to it.

This is my final question. There was some controversy about the form in which your final report came out, because you were specific with the recommendations. The point I want to make here is, why did you not present further suggestions or comments with respect to the cost of implementation and the focus for those expenditures? I want to tie that back to the fact that we fund elementary objectives for education

in this province at a much lower rate than we do our secondary objectives.

I consider that tragic and inappropriate, yet it escaped even a comment from you in your report. I wonder if you now would like to go on the record as commenting in the area of whether or not we are spending appropriately. I am clearly getting a sense from you that it is too late at high school and we need more focus on the elementary. You talk about primary and junior booster programs, all those things. Your opinions would be valued in that area, but they were missing in the report, and I wonder why. Perhaps you would like to comment.

Mr. Radwanski: Yes, I appreciate the opportunity to comment. With regard to why I did not cost out the various recommendations, the answer is quite simple. I am not, as I said at the outset, a pedagogical expert. Therefore, I made no attempt to really prescribe the specific details of implementation in each of the areas. It is directional in each area.

Mr. Jackson: I do not mean to interrupt you. I did not mean you should have costed each item. I misconveyed what I wanted to suggest. Having examined the system, even in the fashion you described, in the way you did, with all your recommendations loaded up in the elementary system, you did not even come to the basic conclusion, you were not even impelled to state that clearly this province has to fund more at the elementary to achieve that. We did not even get that simple statement. That escaped your report and it is still escaping you now. That was what I was looking for.

Mr. Radwanski: No. The statement we got was that the necessary resources had to be allocated to making the things I recommend happen, and to the degree that it involved incremental spending, it would be money well spent. Quite simply, I did not analyse–that would be a whole separate study in itself–all the intricacies and details of school funding in this province. One could easily spend six months or a year doing that. If the Premier or this committee would care to commission me to do it, I would be delighted, but the resources were not there to do that and do everything else as well.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you.

Mr. Mahoney: I realize we are running out of time, so I will be brief. I guess a report of this nature should be provocative, and clearly, this one is. It has generated a lot of discussion and anger from the people in the business of educating.

I am not a professional educator or in that particular category, but it has been my experience that one of the main purposes of education is to create the ability to learn, to teach someone how to learn. In fact, employers look for that. I think one of the things for which employers like to see degrees is not so that they can ask the new employee when Champlain died, to use the earlier example, but to understand that there is an ability to learn inherent in that individual who has just graduated, be it from grade 12 OACs or university or college. You are nodding in agreement, so I assume you agree that it is important to have an ability to learn.

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Your opening statement, in your recommendations, placed less emphasis on the learning process and more emphasis on the content; I find that to be almost regressive and counterproductive to that particular concept. Now I recognize it is important for people to be able to read, to be able to write, and hopefully put together two and two, but is it not really more important in the 1980s, 1990s and on from there that our young people coming out of our system learn in a broad sense how to grasp things, how to think logically, how to attack a particular problem, than it is to know specific content of a specific course?

Mr. Radwanski: More important? I would not agree that it is. Now, first of all, let's be clear. In my recommendation on the essential content of education in Ontario for all students, in the 12 essential content areas, I cite explicitly clear thinking and effective learning. I am very clear in the report that not only are they essential, but both should actually be taught in a very specific way with coaching and so forth, as appropriate. But when you say, is thinking and learning not more important than specific content, I would have to tell you that there is no such thing as content-free thought.

To learn, further, you have to start with a foundation. There are some facts and some basic abilities–if you cannot read, for instance, you are not going to learn a whole lot, unless maybe you can learn some by listening to stuff and so on, but you are going to be somewhat inhibited in your ability to learn, and so on down the line.

As to how you learn to learn, to come back to the other point, surely if we agree that learning to learn is important, you do not learn to learn in the abstract. You also do not learn to learn by only learning that which comes easily to you, which is where a lot of the current approach goes off the track. If we agree that learning to learn is important, then saying: "Well, this kid is really

good at these three subjects, so let him concentrate on learning there. He has more trouble in some of these other areas, so why bother"–the only way to learn to learn is by learning that which does not come easily to you to learn, if you can follow the semantics of that.

The content is essential, not only for its own value, but because otherwise we end up with people later in life–you have to learn something pertinent to a job. You cannot tell the employer: "Gee, I do not really want to learn that. I would rather learn something else instead, because I find it difficult to learn that." I think they go hand in hand. One is not more important than the other. A person who comes out of high school knowing how to learn, but having no idea even of the rudimentary facts, let's say, of world history, of how we as a society got to where we are, is not going to be in a very good position to learn it later.

Mr. Mahoney: But how in the world would a person learn to learn and not pick up the content; I mean if you teach in a broad sense, if you teach people on an individual basis?

Mr. Radwanski: No, if you teach people to learn in the abstract–

Mr. Mahoney: No, I am not suggesting that.

Mr. Radwanski: Past a certain point all this sort of unfocused, touchy-feely, learn-to-learn and learn-to-think is all very well, but why should you not spend those years, while you are learning to learn, learning the things you need to know to be a useful and fully informed participant in society, in the workplace, as a consumer, etc.? Why would one want to move away from what I think most people would agree are essential areas of knowledge and skills that most of us would certainly want our own children to possess?

Mr. Mahoney: I think it is a little bit of semantics actually, because you definitely have a chicken-and-egg situation. I think the emphasis on the content, however, is something that a lot of people who went through the education system in the 1950s and 1960s saw you reverting to, reverting to the rote type of learning process that many of us went through, that we do not consider very productive.

Mr. Radwanski: I have tried to indicate, as much as possible, that this is not what the report says at all. Some things probably can only be learned by rote, and I do not think we should fool ourselves that all rote learning is, by definition, bad. If you are going to learn mathematics, there is something to be said for learning your multiplication tables, and not kind of puzzling it out every time by thinking independently. That is rote learning.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess we disagree there, too, because the greatest revelation to me in mathematics, when I was struggling, was to get a tutor and find out that, my goodness, there is actually logic in mathematics.

Mr. Radwanski: That is fine.

Mr. Mahoney: You can actually think out what you are trying to accomplish and you do not have to do it by rote, and therefore I became a much better student at that particular subject.

Mr. Radwanski: I suppose you can also take off your shoes and count your fingers and toes to work out a calculation, but there is a point at which learning the fundamentals of subject matter, even if it involves some rote, is not automatically a bad thing.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: He knows how to come to our level.

Interjections.

Mr. Mahoney: I am going to leave that one alone. I am surprised you did not recommend reintroducing Latin. The statement you made earlier–I say this and I hope you will take it with utmost respect–that you do not want to be painted as someone who is advocating retention or advocating failure is, again, something I find contrary to the statement in the report that says to fail the student if he cannot keep up.

Mr. Radwanski: Wait a moment. Fail the student?

Mr. Mahoney: But give him extra help.

Mr. Radwanski: Not fail the student. Do not push the student or dump him ahead without knowing what he needs to know to have a chance of functioning effectively at the next level. If nothing else works, yes, give the student the extra help. Do not just wash your hands of him and pass him from hand to hand and say, "Let next year's teacher worry about doing something," and the next teacher says, "No, let the next one worry," and the child washes up in high school, seriously deficient in an important subject area.

Then the argument is, "We have to have streaming because without streaming these kids would flounder because they do not know anything." Then he or she is in a low stream with low expectations and borderline to meaningless content, and either drops out in disillusionment or comes out into the workplace and society

schooled, but not educated in terms of knowing what we would want our children to know.

That is not our answer. To play around with putting a negative terminology on it and say, "Hey, let's go out and fail kids," I do not think is correct and I am not even sure it is helpful in terms of trying to come to grips with the very fundamental questions we are trying to address.

Mr. Mahoney: Perhaps another way of putting what you are saying is that you are opposed to social promotion–

Mr. Radwanski: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: –and that there should be some basis for promotion. Even though you have recommended eliminating the credit system, it could be something that ties into a promotion on a credit basis, on a course basis, as opposed to just a social promotion.

Mr. Radwanski: I would not want to get into those kinds of specifics, as I said, because I did not study specifics. What I emphasized, and the only thing I am emphasizing, is the essential of accepting that each child can learn, and that unless we have mechanisms to effectively force the system to do what is difficult or inconvenient for the system–that is to expand the effort and the resources to bring that child to that knowledge and those skills at a certain point–then we are not doing our job with the system. We are just making it too easy institutionally to get into a kind of educational determinism that says that if a child is not learning in a given subject, that means he or she was not meant to or is not ready, and to heck with it. That is not good enough.

Mr. Mahoney: I think that is all I will say.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have been in a fairly combative mood with our second presenter, which we should have given to Lloyd as well. Heavens, it only seems fair that we would share out our intensiveness.

Mr. Radwanski: He puts on a better show.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: My sense, the more I listen to this, is that we are having some semantical differences and that a slight difference in emphasis is what we are hearing. Unfortunately, I do not think we have got to some of the nubs of the questions about standards and how easily one can identify those standards and other kinds of factors, such as social peer pressure and other things that are having an effect on a kid in the development stages. I would not want George to go away with the sense that we are all here in an attack mode on this. Speaking personally, I have been wanting some clarification and some better understanding of where things are going.

I think some false dichotomies have been established that come out of a reading of your report and even in the nature of our questions, the more I listen to the debate that is on. I wish we had more time to clarify our use of language here and find out where the nub of the difference of philosophy really is between a Lloyd Dennis and a George Radwanski. In some areas, there is a presumption of difference, which I do not think is there and in other areas it is. I really wish we could deal with it more precisely than we have been able to this morning because I think we have been dealing with some straw men, including myself. If I had known that the dichotomies were not there, I would have focused on other things.

Mr. Radwanski: I must respond to that by saying I wish we had had an opportunity to deal more with some of those varied, serious and substantial points, but I think we all have a shared concern to the degree that questions or responses are hostile or angry. It does not bother me.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Except at an editorial board meeting.

Mr. Radwanski: We always got along amicably there. To the degree that one is in the position of saying a little that the emperor has no clothes, in terms of saying we are not doing in some important respects as well by our children in the education system as educators and those who have been closely involved with the system would like to believe or would like to have us believe, one is going to stir up a hornets' nest. One is going to get people being very defensive and antagonistic, and that is fair. As long as people stop playing rhetorical games long enough to stop and think about the substance of the concerns, then I do not mind being a lightning rod for whatever else people want to throw around. In that sense, I have no difficulty at all.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Jackson has a final comment.

Mr. Jackson: I do not wish to treat you as a lightning rod with things to throw around. However, I did have one question to pose to you with respect to your recommendation on the removal of the credit system. I am asking you if you went through the intellectual exercise of having instituted all the reforms that you suggested in the elementary system, including mentoring, the additional guidance, all of those factors, would you have changed your attitude about how we structure and how we allow our secondary students to operate? That is an

intellectual exercise I would be anxious to know if you went through; if you looked at the two systems in isolation, that once the system was in place, you envisaged elementary when, in fact, we had a very good secondary system in place now, and perhaps our problem is that our limited commitment in elementary has allowed us to graduate students of the calibre that you indicated in your report. Did you address that?

Mr. Radwanski: Of course, but I do not share your assumption or your premise that if one did the one, then the other would be fine. My sense is that in the high school, certainly, streaming is entirely inappropriate and socially indefensible for the reasons I cite in the report.

Mr. Jackson: After 10 years of all that work and effort on a student and he arrives at high school and you find ability grouping–I am not hung up on streaming; I consider it ability grouping as a pedagogical necessity–

Mr. Radwanski: I find it inappropriate and unfair for reasons I explained in the report, and I do not think the committee wants me to go into in full detail now. With regard to the proliferation of course choice, I still come back to the fact that creating a kind of a smorgasbord of subject matter in which you can get a considerable portion of your credits for a smattering of this and a bit of that does not produce a meaningfully structured education in terms of people coming out of there actually knowing much of anything. I think that is a very real problem. I think that would be real, regardless of what one did in elementary school.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Radwanski. As Mr. Johnston said, we do not want you to go away feeling that we are totally antagonistic, at least not totally antagonistic. Certainly, many of the recommendations you have made, for example, for mentoring, remediation and the need for more specific goals and objectives have found a lot of favour with the members.

However, that not withstanding, there are certain areas which certain members have difficulties with. I was trying to be well behaved and contain myself during this very stimulating conversation, but I just could not. I had to ask you one last question. Mr. Mahoney touched on it when he said, "Are you going back to the 1960s with your need for rote learning?"

Let me preface my comments by saying that I do not have nor have I ever had a vested interest in the system. I have been neither a teacher nor a trustee. I have, however, an interest in the system since I have two children in it currently. When I read your report, quite frankly, many aspects of it gave me a sense of déjà vous. By the end of it, I realized why you were in many aspects advocating a return to the system in which you and I got educated back in the 1960s. I was just wondering, when you look at the fact that the dropout rate in the 1960s was much higher than it is today, probably approaching the 50 per cent level, how can you justify that and not say it is nostalgia that is making us look back on it as such a wonderful education system as opposed to what we have today. If we are at 35 per cent today and we were at 50 per cent 20 years ago, are we not moving in the right direction?

Mr. Radwanski: I am inclined to say nostalgia is not what it used to be, but no. First of all, I do not see the change in the dropout rate as being attributable to the kind of changes we have had over the last 20 years, quite frankly. There was a certain trend line. A whole lot of factors went into it. The whole change in the structure of our society, the demands for more education for employment, greater urbanization and the change in the nature of employment contributed gradually to an increase in the perceived need to stay in school.

On the other hand, if you look at the figures, as I pointed out in the report, certainly, the immediate effect of the kind of changes we brought into our education system, say, at the high school level, when the kind of Lloyd Dennis type thinking was brought in, the data, including some work done by Alan King, make very clear that, far from increasing retention, that stuff had the immediate result, not only in Ontario but in every province where it was brought in, but as distinct from other provinces where it was not, of temporarily increasing the dropout rate. It was only at the point where youth unemployment began increasing for other reasons that people stayed in school longer.

The first part of the answer is that I do not see the evidence that the changes in terms of the lack of a clarity of purpose or the current approaches to streaming and proliferation of course choice in the high schools of themselves contribute to retention in schools. Quite the contrary.

Secondly, I certainly see the evidence that for those who do stay in school until completion, a high school diploma is no longer a meaningful credential necessarily in terms of what they know or are able to do. In the long run, that devalues the whole experience to the point where people will start saying, "What is the point of going to high school if I am not planning to go on to further education, if people are not going to take

my diploma seriously anyway, because they do not know what it means?"

Beyond that, I think the ultimate point to make is that I am not simply recommending a return to what we were doing 10 or 20 years ago, although I would not be apologetic if I were because it is possible to say, and in some respects I guess I am saying, policy choices and so on always involved turnings and branchings off. It is not necessarily wrong to say, "Whoops, in some respects, we took a wrong turn and maybe the mainstream direction we had been on before then is a more appropriate one." I would not regard that as nostalgia or inappropriate.

But I am not saying entirely that because what I am saying is that there has been a great deal of very valuable advances in the last 20 years, and we continue to have them, in teaching methods, in individualization in the sense of recognizing that different teaching techniques work better with different students and so forth in bringing curriculum alive and not just relying on rote memorization, which I am not an advocate of at all.

What I am saying is that we should now have a synthesis of the past and the present by applying all that pedagogical knowledge and those techniques to the pursuit of meaningful outcomes, rather than to just sort of floundering around in an intellectual mush, having all these techniques and not knowing what we are trying to use them to do in terms of what the child should know and be able to do at the other end of that educational process. It is much more complex than saying, "Let's turn back the clock."

I do not know if nostalgia has ever been my strong suit, but I do not think that is really what the report says, quite frankly.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Radwanski. Let us just say we will agree on some aspects and agree to disagree on others. Thank you very much for your contribution in stimulating the discussion on education in Ontario. Many more people are talking about it and thinking about it now, and in that I think you have made an extremely valuable contribution.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am somewhat used to floundering in intellectual mush.

Madam Chairman: On Mr. Johnston's positive note, the select committee on education shall stand adjourned until 2:30 p.m.

The committee recessed at 12:33 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:38 p.m. in committee room 1.

Madam Chairman: Welcome to the select committee on education as we continue our review of the organization of the education process in Ontario. Our first presenter this afternoon will be the Kingston Area School to Employment Council. Could you come forward, please?

Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. I guess I should say welcome back to our committee. We are always delighted to hear from people who are working with young people in this area. Please start whenever you wish. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time and we are hoping that at least part of it will be reserved for members' questions. Would you just begin by introducing yourself for the purpose of Hansard?

KINGSTON AREA SCHOOL TO EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL

Mr. Merrin: My name is Jay Merrin. I am chairperson of KASE.

Mr. Ralph: I am Eric Ralph, co-operative education co-ordinator for the Frontenac County Board of Education.

Mrs. Weir: I am Carole Weir. I am assistant superintendent for the Frontenac-Lennox and Addington County Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Mr. McConkey: I am Skip McConkey, executive director of the Kingston Area School to Employment Council.

Mr. Merrin: We would like to thank you again for the opportunity to present to you today. The KASE Council is a nonprofit, community-based organization whose mandate is school-to-work transition. Our main focus is on early school leavers as well as graduates entering the workforce. Our membership consists of business, labour, separate and public boards of education and the community at large.

Our observations and recommendations are based on our experience in developing and implementing school-to-work transition programs and from the various groups–business, labour, students, parents and teachers–involved in our working committees and ongoing projects.

We believe the education system must play a critical role in helping our children learn how to learn, to be flexible, to understand the necessity for quality and to learn the basics if we are to have a workforce that is capable of successfully competing in a global marketplace. We believe that to achieve this excellence we must heighten our expectations of students and educators, we must use every medium possible to involve parents and the community in the responsibility to maximize the potential of our children to make a successful living and a successful life. It is with this perspective in mind that we make our submission and present our recommendations.

The first subject we were asked to comment on was grade promotion. We would like to review our observations with you. Grade or subject promotion does not appear to be the real issue for early school leavers going from school to work prior to high school completion, but rather their individual perception of success against failure. It seems clear that students who are academically successful stay in school, learn how to learn and appear better prepared for long-term employment.

Our observation is that many of the factors–attitude, motivation, behaviour–which are reported or observed in early school leavers have been established at a preschool stage. Second, under our current system of grade promotion, many students reach the high school level with significant differences in skills and knowledge. Those who are early leavers are often faced with continuing in subjects in which they already have significant accumulated deficits and, as a result, experience failure. This, combined with the social disadvantages, contributes significantly to the unprepared student leaving school and entering the world of work.

Our recommendations would be:

1. Establish local multiministry councils to direct a greater proportion of available resources to preschool children; a present model is the Interagency Council for Children in Kingston.

2. Continue the excellent initiatives of the Ministry of Education to reduce class sizes in the primary division to other divisions. The next phase would be grade 3 and grade 4, with heavy provision for the use of nonteaching assistants, remedial specialists and community resources, with the goal to reduce deficits in mastery of basic skills.

3. Direct and support secondary teachers to engage in meaningful community-oriented updating of their knowledge and skills. A community-based internship or additional quali-

fication course which is proposed by KASE would address this concern. This will contribute to success for secondary students, as the updating by teachers will impact significantly on a more relevant curriculum.

Semestering: Our observations are that the increased flexibility of semester programming, entrances and exits is excellent for preparing students for the transition from school to employment. The multiple entry-exit points accommodate many students making up failed or missed courses, students re-entering, students working for co-op, exchange, travel or other enrichment opportunities.

Our recommendations would be, first, that semestering enhances the transition from school to work; second, that semestering is a new structure that should demand a new training of teachers to cope with longer periods. The methodology requires an activity-based approach to learning. Pre-service at faculties of education and in-service for current teachers must be mandatory.

Streaming: Streaming as a process seems appropriate today because many children do reach high school with a wide variance of knowledge, ability, skills and social behaviours which make it virtually impossible, given today's teaching styles, to teach them as a homogeneous group.

In recognizing the above, we believe that while streaming recognizes individual differences and learning styles, it tends to discourage overachievement in the basic and general levels. Second, we recognize the potential social benefit of homogeneous grouping but believe that the elimination of streaming would hold back the gifted and tend to intimidate the less gifted student.

To recap one of our concerns, that of increasing expectations, we believe that streaming inadvertently has the effect of lowering expectations–knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour–for the students, parents and teachers of general- and basic-level students.

Our recommendations:

1. That students be kept together until the completion of grade 10, particularly in the core subjects, and that streaming take place in the senior grades, 11 and 12.

2. That recommendations previously made under our grade promotion section be adopted, which in the long term, we believe, would enable homogeneous groupings through to grade 11.

3. Teacher training should reflect different methods of teaching for different levels of academic abilities. The emphasis must be on different approaches in classroom management and teaching methodologies for general and basic programs.

OSIS: In an overall sense, it is felt that OSIS is a well-written document which gives a clear blueprint for organizing schools. At the same time, the document is not clearly understood by the public and is not always precisely understood by educators.

The goals of education are too general and too broad in scope and, as such, they do not provide sharp focus to the educational enterprise.

The single diploma is misleading. It is not well understood that one needs to see a transcript in order to interpret and evaluate a diploma. There is major concern in the community that a diploma does not guarantee some minimum proficiencies and skills.

The 30-credit diploma will frustrate students taking courses predominantly at general and basic levels and will increase the dropout rate.

The general public is somewhat confused over the length of time needed to achieve a diploma.

Our recommendations are:

1. There should be a narrow selection within compulsory courses, placing more emphasis on literacy, numeracy and the type of general knowledge associated with disciplines such as history and geography.

2. At least one compulsory course should be dedicated to life skills and career exploration. This is particularly true with respect to students at risk.

3. Greater consideration should be given to a trimester school year, with one trimester ending logically at the Christmas break.

4. Considerably more emphasis should be placed on co-operative education, job shadowing, school adoptions and other processes which bring the schools and the community into closer partnership.

5. Despite codes of conduct, there remains a sense that there is some laxity in discipline. The compulsory school age should be reviewed, and greater emphasis needs to be placed on bringing the influences of social and legal agencies to bear on a problem which essentially resides in the home and the social arena.

In conclusion, we recommend:

1. That identification of learning disabilities and social disadvantages be done at the earliest possible time, ages 3 and 4.

2. That class sizes in the early grades be reduced and that para-educational professionals from our community be used to support teachers,

in particular to work with those students identified with learning disadvantages.

3. That the government clearly define the role of the education system and its outcomes. Every effort must be undertaken to educate the public and parents towards their responsibilities in the educational process.

4. That the government involve a number of ministries and the community to partner with educators in assisting and providing resources to the education community and its student body.

5. That considerably more professional development directed by the Ministry of Education towards central objectives be initiated.

6. That there should be an increased emphasis on teacher evaluation and appraisal, with an association between merit and pay.

7. That rate of change in education, particularly at the secondary level, be managed. The rate of educational change has been so great that it is impossible to keep pace and to effectively fully implement any one change.

That is our presentation. Thank you.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Miclash): Okay, we will go to questions. Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There are a number of areas where I agree with you. I think that is a very positive thing to say right at the very beginning, and then not turn it into an attack. I do not really intend to do that. I have some questions, though.

Your observation on page 3 is that "many of the factors...which are reported or observed in early school leavers have been established at a preschool stage." What do you base that on?

Mr. Merrin: In our work in looking at why people leave school at an early age or why they leave before completing, we are trying to look at the root causes. It would seem, from discussing those causes with educators and employers, that a lot of them, in terms of the attitude/behaviour ones, started at a very early age. They end up with the children going through the public school system with accumulating deficits, etc. If we could attack those at an early age, we would resolve the basics. When I say "the basics," I mean the early issues; I guess that is the answer. Maybe there is somebody else in our group who can add something.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What struck me as interesting is that, in terms of a disability that needs to be identified in terms of learning, you have not identified socioeconomics as the reason for that. What you have reported on is attitude, motivation and behaviour in a 3- to 4-year old being the factor. I have not heard that before, and I am just interested in hearing the notion that this cannot be dealt with in grades 1 and 2. Not that I disagree with the perspective; I was just wondering what it was based on. The socioeconomic information is there and available, it seems to me, in terms of the difficulties that are going to come, and certainly the need to identify a learning disability early, that kind of thing, is there. But in terms of motivation and things like that, I have not really heard before that those trends are there even before they get to kindergarten or grade 1. That is new to me.

1450

Mr. Merrin: Personally, I was involved in a nursery school for underprivileged children in Kingston where we took preschool children. Part of the mandate there was to try to spot the disabilities, the disadvantages, early on. A simple one could be hearing and speech. If you start to resolve those things earlier, then you give the children a better chance when they enter school to be able to learn.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I actually would be interested in knowing more about the interagency council for kids in Kingston, and getting any data you could get from that would be great. I tend to support your notion of front-end loading, that kind of support.

You confused me a little bit with your use of the terms "homogeneous" or "homogeneous groupings," because I always reverse the terms. From what you seem to be indicating, a heterogeneous grouping is what we have through the public school system; then we move to homogeneous groupings where we put the basic kids together as a group where we think they are enough alike that they could be one homogeneous group, and then the general kids in one group. You seem to reverse the terms, if I am reading you correctly. I just want to make sure that is what you have done, because in recommendation 2, if the recommendations under grade promotion were adopted, in the long term it "would enable homogeneous groupings through to grade 11," when you would then allow streaming.

I just want to make sure we are talking the same language. Again this morning we had a number of times with Radwanski where I think there was a language problem that was causing us our difficulties. My use of the language would then be that you would say, let's keep heterogeneous class groupings together until grade 11 and then stream into homogeneous groupings. That would be my language. Your language is a different notion of what homogeneity is.

Mr. Merrin: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: On the notion of a trimester school year, have you had any involvement with the other–I am wondering where it came from. It was in Ottawa, but it was eastern Ontario boards, at any rate, that came forward with the notion of a semester system rather than a trimester system, or changing the startup date so that school started on August 15, I think it was, and ran through until before Christmas and the exams were held before Christmas; then it started in January and went until May as an alternative to the trimester school. Would you like to talk a bit about why trimester? We have heard a number of people in support of both notions. I would just like to hear a little bit more from you on it.

Mr. Merrin: We have not had contact with the other boards. Perhaps Eric could speak on semestering.

Mr. Ralph: We just feel that for the number of students who are early school leavers, the more opportunities we give them to come back into a school system, the better it is, and that is why we are so supportive of semestering itself.

We see trisemestering as an additional opportunity. For example, the new Futures initiative gives those students who are high-risk young people in that 16- to 23-year age group an additional opportunity to access education in Ontario. Any opportunity to bring an additional entrance or exit from the system is to our advantage.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I throw out to you the difficulty that has been posed to us, using a different language for it, that with the heavy amount of part-time work that is being done by students at this point, if you go to a trimester for your system, in fact you may be exacerbating the problems for a number of kids who "need to work"–I will use that in quotation marks–because you are compressing the amount of time they have to deal with the subject areas in by moving to an even shorter amount of time in a trimester versus a semester, even; that that is going to cause some problems for kids in the lower socioeconomic level and who are going to need to work. It might take away their summers and that kind of thing, where they need to really accumulate some money in terms of their economic unit in their family. This could be very problematic for exactly the ones you do not want to leave the system. Do you have a reaction to that?

Mr. Merrin: I do not think we have thought about it in those terms, but I guess the other side of the coin would be that it would not be necessary that they go for three semesters. In other words, you might go for two semesters. There may be other things you could do in the winter. You could get a job in the winter that you could not in the summer, that sort of thing.

Mr. Ralph: If I may, the experience of the universities and the colleges that are moving to trimester systems has been very positive. That has not been a problem, as employers tap into the availability of students throughout the year.

One of KASE's initiatives is in the part-time student working. We have undertaken a survey of our 10 secondary schools in the Kingston area to find out about that transition from school to employment that we know is taking place, but is taking place on an informal basis of students working part-time. We would really like to be able to understand that informal transition and get the school system to hook on to that kind of transition we know is taking place.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Very interesting. The other problem that was raised with us was the notion of the fragmentation of courses in terms of this pedagogy of learning certain subjects that comes with the semester system, maybe not taking math for a certain period of time between semesters.

I wonder if you see the trimester system as improving or ameliorating the problem of fragmentation because the kids will be able to take it again earlier than they would if they were taking it on a semester basis, if you follow what I am saying.

Mrs. Weir: I guess that is if you recognize fragmentation as a problem. I do not think it has been our experience that it really is a problem. The students seem to readily begin the subject even though they have had a semester away from it, and that is in the school subjects that are very sequential.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is interesting because we have been hearing the opposite from educators.

Mr. Beer: Just a question on the co-op program and semestering: Is it be your view that you would like to see all the secondary schools go to semestering? Would that make it easier to provide the co-op program, or can that be done as well in the full-year school? What has your experience been there?

Mr. Ralph: I think co-operative education meshes very nicely with the semestered system. A student could be out in the work experience for one half-year. In some boards it is set up that

way. All our schools in the Kingston area offer co-operative education and all our schools are now semestered. Our last school went to semestering one year ago.

Mr. Beer: This may not be possible to answer, but with the co-op program you have had in place so far which is now–how many years in Kingston have you been doing that? Two?

Mr. Ralph: We have been doing co-op for many years. There has been special incentive for the past three years, though.

Mr. Beer: Then it may be possible to answer the question, which was whether you have had enough experience to determine whether there are some things that it cannot do. Are you still at the point where you feel that you can mix and match and probably do just about anything with that kind of a program, or are there some things where you are saying, "Look, it is good here, but it is not going to help us in some other areas"?

Mr. Ralph: No, I feel that co-operative education is the link with the community and therein lies its strength. When you look at the placements, it addresses many of the problems that we brought before this select committee this afternoon.

For example, it gets teachers out into the community. An accounting teacher would be out at a chartered accountant firm having a look at what a co-op student is doing there and seeing whether the things that are actually being taught to them in the classroom are being practised in the community. Co-operative education is certainly moving into all subject areas, which we call academic co-op. Our program has increased 30 per cent over the last year.

Mr. Beer: Has there been any resistance from particular groups, let's say, or businesses or whatever, to the program?

Mr. Ralph: The more the community becomes involved in it, I think the more people understand how important they are in our delivering educational services. We have a co-op advisory committee which is made up of members from the community. They are very important in giving us the feedback from the employers' point of view. We have been strongly supported by the community in case endeavours as well as co-operative education.

Mr. Beer: One final question: Does the board work in conjunction with the community college in terms of the co-op programs, where people are going and that sort of thing?

Mr. Ralph: Yes, it does. We have identified at St. Lawrence College in Kingston a co-operative education co-ordinator. So our teachers phone the college and that co-ordinator will place a co-op student in animal care technology or electronics or health care. Last semester, we had 25 co-op students working in the college. That makes the transition much easier for students who are leaving school and going to our local community college.

1500

Mr. McLean: I have a supplementary on that question. The other day we had the Ontario Chamber of Commerce here. They indicated to us that perhaps there should be students who should not be promoted a grade if their academics did not require it. What is your reaction to that?

Mr. Merrin: We spent a lot of time discussing it and felt that the long-term solution is the one we have indicated in grade promotion; that is, if the problem is addressed at an early age, with lots of support, then hopefully you resolve the problem. It is a tough one, because where do you start to give people consequences? Our feeling was that if you address it early, if you really upfront it, then we can solve some of the problems that we see right now.

The Acting Chairman: I would like to thank the council for coming before the committee today. It was a very interesting brief. We have heard about Transitions in the past and this is just another transition that we have not gone into as deeply.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do all the schools in the Kingston area have junior kindergarten?

Mr. Merrin: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: All of them do.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you very much for coming.

Mr. Merrin: Thank you.

The Acting Chairman: Our next presentation is by TVOntario. Would that group come forward, please. Just have a seat. Welcome to the committee. Perhaps you could identify yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

TVONTARIO

Mr. Ostry: I am Bernard Ostry, chairman and chief executive officer of TVOntario.

Mr. Roberts: Bill Roberts, senior managing director, external relations, TVOntario.

Mr. Duprey: I am Donald Duprey, managing director, English program services.

Ms. Hyne: Lynn Hyne, manager of utilization-educational services.

The Acting Chairman: I would like to thank you for being with us today. As you know, you have half an hour for your presentation, if you would like to begin, please.

Mr. Ostry: I would like to begin by saying how pleased we are to be appearing before you today. The high degree of interest many organizations have in the work of this committee is surely a reflection of the importance they attach to the review you have embarked upon and the complex nature of the educational process, particularly as it relates to preparation of students for entry into the job market.

Many students are not gaining the knowledge and skills they need to be productive members of our community, individuals who can contribute to their own development and to the enrichment of their society. That the level of critical skills such as literacy and numeracy is unacceptably low is a tragedy, and nothing less. We at TVOntario do not pretend to be able to correct this situation singlehandedly, but we can join with others in the education system to address these and other urgent concerns.

We are here today to remind you that this province possesses in its Ontario-wide educational television networks a unique and valuable resource in the search for excellence in the Ontario educational system. More important, it is a resource that works for the students of this province, and works equitably. TVOntario continues to work for students after they leave the formal setting of school. We are committed to lifelong learning, and in a complex, rapidly changing work environment, continuing learning is essential.

TVOntario has been dealing effectively with many of the issues the government and society are concerned about. The Toronto Star reported a few years ago that what TVOntario offers in its educational programming is, unfortunately, Ontario's best-kept secret.

I recognize that our comments and presentation does not focus exclusively on streaming, semestering, OSIS and grade promotion–the present, narrower focus of the committee–but I am confident that by the conclusion of our presentation, you will agree with me that educational television is one resource that can successfully reduce the worst effects of the current educational crisis in which we find ourselves.

To demonstrate in a small way the power of television as a tool for learning, my colleague Lynn Hyne has prepared a short presentation.

Ms. Hyne: It is a pleasure to be here, not only as a TVOntario representative who has been told by thousands of teachers and workshops the value of using television in the classroom, but also as a teacher who has personally experienced the benefits of teaching students with television.

The first segment I would like to share with you comes from a new junior-level series entitled Write Stuff. In a simple format, the series supports whole-language learning and helps students to learn to read and write through their own language experience because student material, stories and poetry provide the content for each program. I would like to demonstrate the difference between watching and using television, and with your co-operation, I would like you to help me with this demonstration.

Mr. Mahoney: I hope it is not too tough.

Ms. Hyne: I have realized the level of challenge.

[Video presentation]

Ms. Hyne: How does that make you feel or how would you describe it?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I want to be there.

Ms. Hyne: How many vote in favour? We will continue.

[Video presentation]

Ms. Hyne: What sounds can you imagine you would hear? Mr. Mahoney?

Mr. Mahoney: Seagulls.

Ms. Hyne: Mrs. O'Neill?

Mrs. O'Neill: There must be something going on in that background. I think there is some din of people speaking. It looks like a congested shoreline.

Ms. Hyne: You are to the head of the class. Thank you. Let's listen.

[Video presentation]

Ms. Hyne: Students love this series. It motivates them to write their own stories or to illustrate another student's piece of writing. Here are samples from the graphics you saw on the screen.

We have received a phenomenal number of submissions from students across Ontario, and I would like to share with you what one grade 5 Vietnamese student from Windsor, only two years in Canada, wrote to us about the Huron Indians. Her first paragraph reads: "The solemn winds of time are calling out to winter. The snow is cold and damp. Winter has come upon the Hurons. The weather is bitter and the sky is always grey." It touches me.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What grade?

Ms. Hyne: Grade 5. When I paused the program twice, I was showing you how a teacher might use it. Pausing a program allows the students to predict outcomes or comment on something they have seen or heard. A teacher may choose to replay a segment, to highlight a particular segment, and this is what using television is all about.

The next segment is from the intermediate-level series Business Concepts. This program teaches practical skills, and in this case brings inventory and stock-taking to life.

1510

[Video presentation]

Ms. Hyne: I would like to draw your attention to the female character, Charmaine Checker, in the nontraditional role and to the multicultural mix of the program.

The next segment is from the secondary math series Vectors, and before the segment begins, here comes another challenge. I would like to ask Mr. Keyes.

Interjections.

Mr. Keyes: What are we doing, cruising down the river?

Ms. Hyne: Mr. Keyes, you are about to see a segment, and I would like you to listen for the names of the two men in the police car. Let's watch.

[Video presentation]

Ms. Hyne: The question is, what are the names of the two men in the police car? You can get help.

Mr. Keyes: Ed and Charlie.

Ms. Hyne: Very good.

Interjection: You get the rest of the afternoon off.

Mr. Jackson: You get to run for the Liberal Party.

Mr. Keyes: I have been used to listening to robots like that for a long while around here.

Ms. Hyne: Well, there is more to that question than I realized, but it was a very simple question. It is not necessarily the type of question that a teacher would ask in the classroom because it really requires just simple rote memory, but it helps to prove a point.

Probably Mr. Keyes was more attentive to what he was watching than the rest of the group. There was a purpose or responsibility attached to his viewing, whereas the rest of you may have been a little more laid back or relaxed, which is similar to at-home viewing, where less expectation is attached to the viewing experience.

What happens in school is that every student's viewing is focused. Following the focused viewing, you move to the while-viewing experience where you may pause, rewind, check for comprehension when the program is finished and then the teacher will springboard into meaningful activities that provide meaningful outcomes.

The advantage of using television in the math class is that it makes math more visual and alleviates math anxiety. Few resources are available, and television adds a different perspective to math. We traditionally associate math learning with the blackboard and textbook. Using a television program like Vectors enables teachers to provide practical applications at the same time as they introduce the concept.

Not only do I have the challenge of reviewing several hours of programming in a short period of time, but I also have a double challenge. What I have shared with you is just half of the story. We offer a wealth of materials to the francophone, French-as-a-second-language population, through our network La Chaîne Française.

The first segment is for primary level science education: Viens voir.

[Video presentation]

1516

Ms. Hyne: The second segment is from C'est chouette. It is aimed at five- to seven-year-olds and the series is designed to help students develop their senses, imagination, vocabulary and awareness of the environment.

[Video presentation]

1517

Ms. Hyne: She is terrific and the children love her. TVOntario recognizes the importance of the arts to education. This segment, from It's Mainly Music, teaches the concept of harmony.

[Video presentation]

1518

Ms. Hyne: Teachers today would like to be able to divide themselves up many times in order to accomplish all that is necessary. Again, being a teacher, I can definitely appreciate that. Television gives teachers an extension of themselves, and in closing I would like to add a couple of comments.

In Ontario, television is as basic, I feel, to the educational system as the ruler. Whatever you decide is important for the future goals of education, remember the partnership that exists with TVOntario and the support we can give to

these goals. We strive to measure up to all peoples' expectations.

Mr. Ostry: I hope Lynn's presentation has shown you in some small way why our motto is, "We bring learning to life." The children's programming she used in her demonstration is typical of the educational broadcasting materials for all ages that TVOntario was established to produce, acquire and distribute.

TVOntario programs and materials are integral to curriculum implementation and they enhance teacher effectiveness and student learning. Television presentations can do things teachers simply cannot do, for example, create a molecule in three dimensions, and demonstrate its dynamism so as to excite interest in science, regardless of gender.

It is important to recognize, too, that TV is a basic element of virtually every youngster's life in the province. If you realize that in their 12 or 13 years at school, students spend more time with television than with their teachers, television must be recognized as being one of the potentially most powerful, positive forces in their education and in their development.

When we talk about education, specifically the skills and knowledge students are to be equipped with, and we contemplate the merits of back-to-basics, we must bear in mind that television is as basic to the students of today as the slate was to the students of a century ago.

Fortunately, television works. It is appealing and effective and it is up to us, the educators and those interested in education, to ensure that we provide and promote television that is positive, thought-provoking and sensitive for the young citizens of Ontario.

It is encouraging that the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the OTF, shares that view. At its annual meeting, the OTF board of governors voted to encourage the Ministry of Education to continue to explore and fund the use of technologies such as TVOntario's television and specifically, to increase base funding to TVOntario. Such solid support demonstrates our relevance to one important segment of the education community. TVOntario's educational materials also help to equalize learning opportunities in Ontario classrooms. No matter how small or how isolated their communities, no matter how poor or prosperous their students, all teachers have access, at minimal cost, to our high-quality educational products. All students are encouraged to participate.

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Our at-home children's programming, available to every child with a TV set, also stimulates children to learn, explore and experience life in exciting, meaningful ways, through programs like Today's Special, C'est chouette and Polka Dot Door.

The committee has spent a great deal of time considering the pros and cons of streaming. One of the merits of educational television is that it can transcend the barriers, intended or not, of streaming.

TVOntario is responsive. We can and do respond in relatively short order to new issues as they are identified by our society. The technology of educational television is such that we can respond to new priorities in a way the infrastructure is unable to respond. We are responding to the need identified by the ministry for instruction in the skills students require to ease their transition to the workplace, a key concern for this committee.

TVOntario is now producing a new series on skills development. Its goal is to foster skills identified by the Ministry of Education as critical for young people, particularly those at the basic and general levels, as they make the transition from school to the workplace, that is, in communications, computation, coping and career awareness skills. This series is being designed in close consultation with the TVOntario advisory committee composed of Ontario educators. They have emphasized, for example, the importance of having as the on-camera representatives of each occupation young people with whom students can identify.

Part of TVOntario's emphasis is science education for both students in school and for adults at home. A major component in that thrust is our space education/éducation espace project. In the first phase of the project, TVOntario is producing programs on science experiments carried out in a zero-gravity environment geared to high school life sciences curricula.

TVOntario is prepared to do more. In our funding submission this year, we put forward a proposal to assist in dealing with the use of illegal drugs. Our expertise achieved through initiatives such as the acquired immune deficiency syndrome project, together with a relatively small contribution from the Ontario government, will allow us to get in touch with Ontario's youth about this sad situation, a situation now reaching crisis proportions. Indeed, our entire funding submission, presented to the government just last week, touches on issues and priorities of

importance to all Ontarians, including all members of this committee.

We are very proud of the recognition and awards our programs regularly receive in international competition, but the effectiveness of TVOntario's programs has also been proven empirically through program evaluation.

Summative evaluation demonstrates, for example, that TVOntario programs can help students acquire vocabulary and reading skills. Students who used Read All About It! showed statistically significant learning gains in comparison with a matched group of students not exposed to the material.

I could cite additional evidence of our program quality. Read All About It! won the American Action for Children's Television Award in 1982. No foreign producer had previously won this award. Most important, students like it and learn from it.

One little girl in a special education class wrote, and I quote: "I have got your letter. Thank you for writing to me, it makes me feel really good. I am planning to buy a newspaper 'cause I have to earn it myself. When I get enough money for a book I will buy it." members of the committee will recognize that the grammar still needs a little work. None the less, the program made a difference to that child's life and her role in the future of this country.

Another boy wrote: "I'm 12 years old and enjoy Read All About It! I like the sound effects and explosions, it's a very good show to learn about poems and writing and reading and lots of other things. My best episode was 'The War of 1812'." Notice the "my".

Logiciel, a French-language learning system, has met with equal success in the area of science. The system is designed to sensitize children to the biological and physical sciences and to technology. The programs significantly increase student knowledge in their subject areas.

Julie Fournier, 11 years old, from Ottawa, wrote us: "J'ai fait, devant les élèves de ma classe, l'expérience qu'il y dans Viens voir, pour montrer la lune qui tourne autour du soleil et tout le monde a applaudi."

Our best moments are moments such as these, when we hear from the individuals for whom we make a difference. Not too long ago, a 45-year-old viewer, who enrolled in and successfully completed our Bits and Bytes course on computers, called to tell us that we had changed his life. This individual was displaced because of his computer illiteracy. He responded by taking Bits and Bytes and through it we restored his confidence, transferred a necessary marketable skill and he found another job.

Heartwarming situations like that drive and motivate our programmers to continue producing television that makes a lifelong learning difference for Ontarians, that makes the pool of scientists and technologists and service-sector operatives larger and better.

But TVOntario programs are not only based on instinct. We use our research to build even better programs, programs directly responsive to their users, both teachers and students.

Each curriculum-based television program is integrated into a learning system. As you have already noticed from the material we have distributed, programs are accompanied by a teacher's guide and may be packaged with other educational print materials and services. Such materials include student workbooks, audio cassettes and correlation charts that link the programs directly to the curriculum.

When TVOntario produces programs to enhance the Ministry of Education curriculum, we are sensitive to the need to address matters of major social concern, such as sex-role stereotyping and multiculturalism.

This past summer, we sent each member of the Legislature, including the members of this committee, a copy of our multiculturalism video resource lists. They highlight programs of particular interest to teachers and group leaders wishing to explore different aspects of the multicultural and multiracial character of our province.

TVOntario's work in acquired immune deficiency syndrome education is another example of our responsiveness to government- and ministry-identified priorities. It is also an excellent example of TVOntario's work with the community. TVOntario's AIDS team spent half a year covering all of Ontario, from Cochrane to Kenora and from Alexandria to Aberfoyle. The team gave more than 300 workshops to over 13,000 teachers, students, parents and public health educators. The training TVOntario was able to provide in this instance brings me to the last area I would like to cover with you.

You have seen that our programs are not made merely to be watched. Although they have to be attractive and stimulating enough to compete successfully for the viewer's attention, our programs are made to be used. To facilitate that use, TVOntario's educational services departments are catalysts in the development of a network of television resource teachers and Communicateurs clé. Over 5,400 teachers in

English- and French-language schools willingly disseminate information about TVOntario programs and support services to their colleagues. We support their informational needs through our TRT News, a newsletter which goes to every television resource teacher in this province.

In addition, TVOntario has a second network of 134 workshop specialists. They are teachers trained by TVOntario. Once trained, they in turn train other teachers in a workshop setting to use television to implement curriculum.

The superintendent of education for the Renfrew County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, John Stunt, informed me that since the establishment of a television resource teacher network in his jurisdiction, there has been, "a dramatic 62 per cent increase in the use of video resources in classrooms."

A few years ago, TVOntario, together with the Renfrew county separate school board, designed a project to promote the use of television to support child-centred teaching and involve teachers in a collegial approach to learning new skills. The superintendent has since written:

"The project has attracted attention in the education community as an exemplary model for the processes of implementing change in schools. We expect this project will have long-term benefits for both our school system and TVOntario....Services like these, that provide direct benefit to classroom teachers and children in schools, seem to me to be the very essence of the TVO mandate."

We at TVOntario are in wholehearted agreement with this view of our mandate. Indeed, this summer the staff of our English-language programming service defined their vision in these words:

"We stimulate curiosity to encourage learning, to empower individuals to enrich their minds and spirit, and to make informed choices about their lives....We are committed to excellence....We celebrate discovery."

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In closing, TVOntario recommends to this committee that in its own search for excellence in the educational system, it should go beyond consideration of what students are supposed to learn and what teachers teach or how to revamp in its entirety the existing system. The committee might encourage educators to transcend the traditional bounds of teaching and explore effective, powerful means by which students can learn.

Educational television is an educational tool that works with students, with parents and with teachers. It should be allowed to do more, more consistently, especially to help solve some of the current short-term educational problems plaguing Ontario.

Madam Chairman: As a mother whose children grew up on Polka Dot Door and Readalong, I can certainly attest to the fact that TVOntario brings learning to life. That is the good news. The bad news is that I can also attest to the fact you are handing out defective pens that do not write. May I have a refund?

Mr. Ostry: That has to do with the quality of the technological training.

Mr. Jackson: If they had more in their budget, maybe they could give better pens.

Madam Chairman: We will work on that. Perhaps that is a high motivation to cover that in their budget.

Mr. Ostry: We will replace it. I think we have a replacement.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will go to members' questions. Since we are technically out of time, and since we do have our next presenters ready, perhaps you could keep the questions rather brief.

Mr. McLean: As usual, I will set the pace. My questions are always very brief.

How many preschoolers do you feel you touch daily, and how many children do you anticipate you are reaching in school with your programming, preschoolers specifically?

Mr. Ostry: I am not sitting here with our data on that–I will let you have it later–but I am quite prepared to say that, given our reach of 97 per cent of Ontarians, we do know that well over 50 per cent of the preschool children of this province watch our children's programs every single week. There was a test a couple of years ago–I remember this–when a Today's Special happened to be on when Nielson or BBM Bureau of Measurement was running its ratings, and something like 90 per cent of the children of this province were viewing it. It is very high.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Was that 90 per cent of the province or 90 per cent of the viewing kids?

Mr. Ostry: Ninety per cent of the preschool kids.

Mr. Jackson: It is scary that there is that much TV watching going on in preschool.

Mr. Ostry: If they are watching TVO, it is not scary. Nobody will support that.

Madam Chairman: As for Today's Special, that program has so much calibre that I am not surprised. I think it is one of the best children's

programs on television. I do not know if it is still on, because my kids have outgrown it.

Mr. Ostry: It is still on. We have just sold a huge number of them in Australia, and there are a number of stations in the United States that are trying to purchase it.

Madam Chairman: My kids were occasionally willing to give up Polkaroo, but never Today's Special. It was always a high priority.

Mr. Beer: I suppose we have all been in classrooms. If we have been teachers, we have used television, used your programs. I am still struck though, at times, when I go into a classroom, by teachers who really are not, in my view, using the programming properly.

Are there any studies you have done, looking five or 10 years back, some time frame, to give you a sense of how that situation is improving? I just have a couple of questions that would flow from that, because it seems to me that, critically, in terms of this committee, it is how well we are making use of this technology to ensure that kids are better educated.

Mr. Ostry: I will ask Lynn to reply. She has firsthand knowledge of that.

Ms. Hyne: The use of television has increased within the educational system for a number of factors. We would like to take some credit for that from the standpoint that we do offer, through our educational services departments, support to teachers to train them to use the medium effectively in the classroom.

The other factor is that video cassette recorders are a part of everyone's life now, so they are considered an integral resources at home and for teachers now at school.

There is still opportunity for growth in that area. We do have special projects that we focus on–Bruce county is one school board currently, Timmins, Lincoln county, and you have heard about Renfrew county and Durham–where we are working with a select group of teachers, training them specifically, setting them up as trainers of trainers and they are working with their peers and colleagues. We are finding dramatic results through research as a result of these very focused projects.

Mr. Beer: Would the people you are training to go back and train be with the board and have the function of educational television consultant?

Ms. Hyne: They are actually practising classroom teachers.

Mr. Beer: Okay.

Ms. Hyne: We will take something like, for example, in the four projects I have just mentioned, we are looking at the renewal of science education, elementary through secondary. We are using television as the innovative tool to make or create the change but it is practising classroom teachers we are working with, because they need to work with each other on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Beer: What involvement do you have with the various teachers' colleges? Are there now programs for specifically teaching teachers how to make use of television and are you involved in working with the teachers' colleges on those kinds of programs?

Ms. Hyne: Most definitely. I know that a great deal of work is going on within the French educational services departments, particularly with Laurentian and the University of Ottawa. We are also training the faculty members as trainers now and we have a group of faculty coming in in November from the University of Toronto. We work with Dr. Fullan as well. They are coming in to receive some of the specific strategies that we use in the classroom. We are moving more and more in this direction.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think probably it would have been more appropriate for us to have had you in during the philosophy section of what we are dealing with than process, etc., but none of us are being stuck in a rut about that.

What was your budget increase last year over the year before? I cannot remember the percentage.

Mr. Ostry: I am not sure I would like to mention it. It was quite substantial.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was because of La Châine?

Mr. Ostry: In part because of La Châine, in part because of some capital requirements; but also in part because the government provided us with the first instalment in support for increased science programming in the schools. There were new projects like those associated with acquired immune deficiency syndrome which were special projects. The increase was around 12 per cent, something like that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What is the role of TVO in distance education at the moment?

Mr. Ostry: It has had its ups and downs because of problems within that whole community of people in universities who are interested in it, but the majority of the universities themselves have, unfortunately, not shown as great an interest as those, say, in the north or Guelph or one or two other isolated institutions. That is now changing, and I would like to ask Lynn Hyne to

describe what we did in distance education, the committee we established with the Laurentian and other people. Can you comment on that?

Ms. Hyne: I do not have that.

Mr. Ostry: What happened was that because of our concern about this problem and because we were worried that people thought that because we were there we were going to do it when we had not the facilities to do it and we were not degree-granting and all sorts of other reasons why we did not, as a catalyst, we pulled together representatives from all the universities that were interested in distance education and sat them through a series of meetings to the point where they broke up into particular groups, assuming direct responsibilities for certain aspects of distance education, including doing programs for transitional training in skills for people to be able to take off air.

With the $20-million funding that the government provided for the northern group of universities, I think there is going to be a huge expansion in it in Ontario. Quite apart from that, there is an international interest in distance education which is having an impact on the people in Ontario who have a general interest in it, and a demand for programs for the developing world.

1540

As you may know, as a result of the Commonwealth conference in Vancouver last year and the francophone conference in Quebec a few months earlier, an institute has been set up in Quebec to deal with technology for distance education. Another type of funding was provided in Vancouver to accumulate data and a bank of programs and the like for the Commonwealth secretariat to look at the next time it meets. It is an area where there is bound to be a great deal of expansion over the next few years.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One final thing has to do with the impact of services like TVO on the deficit low-income kids have coming into the education system. That was identified by the group that was just in before you and is always presumed to be the case, that kids coming from low-income families move into the education system further behind kids from middle-class families, etc.

Because your preschool programs seem to be so broadly watched, has anybody done any studies that you know of on the effect on kids from low-income families watching some of those programs from the beginning of their literacy training, to see whether it has made any difference to them or whether it has had no impact at all?

Mr. Ostry: Ms. Hyne will be able to answer that.

Ms. Hyne: I am not aware of a specific study which has been done in that area. If you take a look—we not only produce but acquire programs—at the history of Sesame Street and why it was produced and the benefits that children receive from programs like Sesame Street—and they benefit in turn from Today's Special and from Polka Dot Door, etc.—we do have the opportunity to reach the child in a different way and in the home setting.

I would just like to add a personal teaching experience, where I did have a representative cross-section of students in my class. One particular student had difficulty in terms of literacy and, in my mind, I positioned that child: "He has some difficulty. I'll have to work with him." I used television with him, and we were looking at a visual story and trying to code the form of a story and characterization, etc.

Because the message was already decoded with that child because of what he saw and heard, some of the boundaries he felt before he no longer experienced and he had more to contribute than any other student in the class. As a teacher, that was a revelation and as well an understanding that television offers something unique in the educational experience.

Mr. Ostry: It is very hard to get those data. You could, if you spent a billion dollars or something, but the samples are so small in dealing with the spread of television. If you go to do a sampling, you are doing a few hundred or a thousand or so and it is spread all over a whole area. When you start to do the demographics, you are down to looking at what four people experience and you cannot extrapolate from that. In order to make that 400 people, you would have to do a massive kind of sampling.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Surely the other problem is distinguishing, as you do, between using television and watching television. I am not clear that that has made any inroads, because we are still seeing the same demographic profiles, if I can put it that way, in elementary panels that we did 30 years ago.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank TVOntario not only for its presentation today but also for what it has done to public broadcasting and educational broadcasting in this province.

Mr. Ostry: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Our next presentation will be by the Dufferin-Peel unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. Would you come forward, please. Good afternoon. Welcome to the committee. We are pleased you could come before us today. As you notice, we are running a little behind time. Sometimes the questions just get too stimulating or too long, one or the other.

I notice you have quite a comprehensive brief. You may want to consider leaving members to read the first few pages, which are not really related specifically to our mandate, and going directly to your page 4 so we will have sufficient time for questions at the end. It is up to you, but we are hoping there will be time in your 30-minute presentation for questions. Please begin whenever you wish. Would you just start by identifying yourself for the purposes of Hansard?

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, DUFFERIN-PEEL UNIT

Ms. Yakimishyn: My name is Barbara Yakimishyn. I am the president of the Dufferin-Peel unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. Present with me today are three members of our local political advisory committee: Paul Schmidt, a teacher at Cardinal Leger Secondary School and first vice-president of our unit; Wayne Cornack, a teacher at St. Martin Secondary School in Mississauga, who is chairperson of our political advisory committee, and Rob Romanet, a teacher at St. Louis Elementary School in Mississauga and a member of the committee as well.

We do not intend to read our brief to you. Rather we will highlight certain areas. Mr. Schmidt will do the formal part of our presentation and then Mr. Cornack and Mr. Romanet will be happy to assist in answering any questions you may have.

The Dufferin-Peel unit of OECTA is composed of two branch affiliates, elementary and secondary and has an approximate membership of 2,800 teachers. This represents in excess of 10 per cent of the total membership of our provincial body. We serve more than 51,000 students in the 90 schools within the jurisdiction of the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

As members of the committee are aware, the dramatically rapid growth of our system over the past several years has presented unique challenges for both board officials and teachers in terms of services and accommodations for the children we serve. This pattern is projected to continue over the next several years. We welcome this opportunity to address the select committee on education. We hope that our comments today will assist you in your deliberations.

Mr. Schmidt: Taking your cues up very quickly, I think we will move away from the first part and go, as you suggested, to the fourth part, although we do believe that many of the comments we have made on fair funding for a quality education are relevant and would be a helpful service to the committee.

I would like to begin on page 4, education in Ontario schools. To synopsize a lot of this very quickly, we think that in the public domain there is a lot of literature available that is helpful to anybody who wants to take advantage of it. Reginald Bibby and Donald C. Posterski, for example, have pointed out, as we have suggested in 2.2, that the primary concern of most teenagers who are entering secondary schools in terms of their learning needs is around the area of meaning–meaning in their lives and meaning about what will be presented to them by the teachers whom they encounter in secondary schools.

What we have discovered, and certainly I would say that I have discovered it in six years of teaching religious education to mixed levels of students, advanced, general and basic, is that if I cannot do that very quickly, I will be a failure. I know there are a number of people who have tried to teach mixed levels in the area that I teach and find it extremely difficult. I have learned over time that the key in this area is how we bring meaning. Of course, in religious education, we thought we would talk in terms of faith development, but in all education we have to keep meaning as central to the thrust of education.

We would point particularly to many of the comments that were made earlier by Walter Pitman who came before you. We suggest, as he did, that students must recognize interdependence existing in their lives and in today's world. They do wish to examine pressing social, political and economic issues using a holistic approach.

Before I came here today, I had three classes. I have been a classroom teacher, as I said, for six years, teaching mixed-level students. I asked them what they thought I should say to you if they could speak.

Madam Chairman: Is this going to offend our ears?

Mr. Schmidt: No, it would not. In fact, some of the cynicism that surrounds young people's attitude towards government was allayed when they found out Mr. Schmidt was going to go and talk to the committee and try to tell the members how they could improve their school and their system.

1550

Mr. Jackson: Excuse me, are you going to tell them that you were not allowed to tell us?

Mr. Schmidt: Yes; thanks, Cam.

In fact, I did take some of this out and tried to explain some of the bigger words, and they agreed that when they had had teachers who listened more than spoke and asked them many times how they wished to pursue their learning goals, they felt much better about their education. Obviously, that may be seen to be easier to do in what we refer to as the social sciences or the soft subjects rather than the harder sciences and mathematics; I think it still holds true.

In section 2.8, we have alluded to the fact that Alan King, in a study that was done some time ago by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, has indicated many of the same things. If you ask students, over and over again they will tell you the same things on this account.

One area we want to highlight, though, which has to do with some of the research we have done and certainly some of the work I have done in class and experienced in listening to the kids, is the area of, for lack of a better word, understanding contemporary events and kids' concerns about these things.

As we are pointing out, anybody who was reading Jennifer Lewington this summer in the Globe and Mail probably saw the Gallup poll that was done on kids commissioned by National Geographic, which indicated that, beside the kids in the United States, our kids were sort of low people on the totem pole when it came to an understanding of where they were, where other places in the world were and how contemporary events were influencing those areas. Without that structural understanding, it is our belief that kids will have the kind of knowledge that is a mile wide and about half an inch thick. That is not what we see as the route to go.

It is our view that the OSIS document should reflect a greater concern and awareness of the social dimension of learning than one required senior social science credit can possibly deliver. Therefore, we are recommending that the ministry re-examine the OSIS requirements for all social science subjects at the senior level. I think the Gallup poll that revealed a lot of the data relates to this in a serious way.

In section 3, we speak about streaming. As a preamble, we want to say that we support wholeheartedly our provincial association's position on this. Our committee, when deliberating about this, thought that, based upon a lot of the work done by Bibby and others which tends to indicate that schools do a better job in secondary at dealing with the educational needs and learning goals of young adolescents, they tend to fail when you get to older adolescents' schools, because you have put kids of a broad age range together. I might be criticizing my own profession here, but oftentimes we at the upper end do not recognize that the kids who are older can handle a lot more. I think you learn in your first few years of teaching that you do not address grade 9 and grade 10 students as you do the grade 12s.

With respect to the streaming issue, we are suggesting that we should look at leaving things they way they were, i.e., in grade school, all the way up to grade 10, probably until the end of grade 10 and/or age 16. By saying this, we are not implying that we believe streaming is good after that, but we argue that before that, it is simply preposterous to ask a teacher in grade 7 or grade 8 who is in a guidance department to have a meaningful discussion with a 14-year-old boy or girl as to what his or her career needs, goals and ambitions are going to be. The world simply is not like that, and the kids are too confused at that age to make those decisions.

So we were arguing in favour of keeping them as a heterogeneous group, at least into grades 9 and 10. If you are looking at about age 16, we think that is a much more reasonable time in their lives to start looking at making a jump. For example, "Am I going to take a course in physics that is an advanced course or am I going to take a general level course?" All those questions should probably be considered, if not then, then later, but at the bare minimum, not before the end of grade 10 and not before age 16.

Again, I say that as somebody who is experienced, with mixed level kids in my classes from grades 9 through 12. I know these kids have an enormous amount of ability. I have personally seen a lot of kids who are very bright and can ask very good questions harmed by the system we are experiencing right now, in a broad variety of subjects, simply because the system as it exists now has asked a grade 7 or grade 8 teacher to say, "Into grade 9 general English." That is a problem. We may not want to admit it, but

self-esteem and all those things we talk about in a kind of airy-fairy way are affected.

In looking through this, we tried simply to hit upon a lot of the material that is the research base for why it would be better to go with a nonstream situation. I will move on from that because it is all in the brief and go on to the pressure of poverty upon students.

Until a few months ago, we were extremely fortunate in Peel to have an extremely capable and active social planning council that did a lot of extremely good work in the area of social welfare assistance and all the problems that are incumbent upon those who are poor in our society in Peel.

What we want to suggest is that the pressures of poverty significantly affect student performance and ability to continue in education. That is an obvious one, but we have tried to back this up with a lot of statistics from the Social Planning Council of Peel, which probably are a lot worse now than even in 1987 because the housing crisis has hit us as much there as it has in the city.

We have alluded to the magnificent Thompson report that has been produced, which we would recommend if the members of the committee have an opportunity to read it. There is a wealth of information in it that we believe also alludes to how the education system is impacted.

We strongly recommend that all attempts to improve student educational experience include strategies to improve the daily lives of our children of poverty. In terms of specific recommendations, there should be full funding of breakfast, lunch and after-school programs. I have had elementary teachers approach me and tell me they have kids in their classes who are coming to school without eating and without proper nourishment. In many cases, this is profoundly influenced by a family situation that is beyond the control of the child. We believe that if we are going to look at education as in some sense a full part of social service and the social contract, we are going to have to take this aspect of it seriously.

Even a nominal fee for the existing program in Peel prohibits many of our working poor and welfare families from receiving the needed service. That can be verified by talking to our own teachers.

Section 5, day care: I want to encourage the ministry to be a leader in the provision of workplace day care by allocating additional space in school-attached day care for children of school employees as well. We think that probably completes the structure of the system, the social contract that I spoke about before. The number of our people in Peel who need these facilities is overwhelming, as it is in other parts of the province. I am sure you have heard that from a lot of other groups.

Women in leadership positions: The vast majority of our 2,900 members are women teaching both in elementary and secondary. Last year, in a very good study done by our equal opportunity project person, our numbers indicated that we are well behind where we should be with respect to having women in leadership positions in a board of our size. We are the second-largest Catholic board in Ontario. With 2,900 teachers, I think this puts us at about the third or fourth largest employer in Peel. You probably would not know that if you looked at where the women sit in terms of the responsibility allowances and everything else.

1600

We have a long way to go. I do not want to imply that is necessarily anything to do with the board. We have been adding 250 teachers per year or thereabouts for the last three or four years, so it has to do with massive growth and the influx of a lot of women into the system. I am sure time will help, but we are encouraging the province to maintain funding for equal opportunity officers until such time as the inequality is eliminated, as best we can.

Staffing and enrolment is the seventh section of our report. We used a marvellous study that I would highly recommend anybody to get hold of if he can. It was done by Atkinson and Sussman. I hope some of the work is continued by these people. It is called Alternative Futures for Ontario Schools and Some Implications for Performance Appraisal System, but the work that was done looked into the future.

What we want to suggest to the committee is that at least from our teachers' point of view, we are confident about our system and we want to recommend that if there are jobs open, teachers from other affiliates be allowed to come and teach in our boards. That is what the gospel is about, that is what ecumenism is about and that is what our system should be about. That goes for kids as well as for teachers. As an executive, we are really clear on that one.

We recognize the need for fairness and compassion to our fellow colleagues who have had their careers threatened in some cases. We welcome these colleagues to our schools and are committed to a continued responsibility to provide for such dislocations in a spirit of openness and fairness.

As we say, our belief is in the universal commitment to a genuinely Catholic educational system in the spirit of ecumenism. We embrace any of God's children who apply to our schools. We have confidence in the Catholic Christian vision which has sustained our existence in the past, and will continue to grow and guide us in the future.

While I am on this section of the brief, approximately 10 per cent of our teachers right now are non-Catholic. It has never been a problem with our board to welcome those people. I think we are probably a little bit better off in our approach than some of the other boards.

Religious education: We made probably some of the same recommendations as the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association. We think it is good that we have the two credits for religious education. We are encouraging the ministry to come up with some more, if it is possible, and we are suggesting an amendment to regulation 269 that would allow religious ed to be a teaching option at the faculties of education.

On the matter of trustees, the government has undertaken numerous studies to evaluate the way trustees represent ratepayers. It is our belief, based on a lot of the experience of this year and last year, that at boards of our size we have to have trustees who are full-time. There is simply no way you can do this kind of job in an area growing as fast as ours without having full-time people committed to it. Probably many of you were municipal politicians before the bite of the educational tax dollar, which right now is larger than most others. We have to be vigilant about it. What else can I say?

In conclusion, we have not directly addressed the problem of dropouts as dramatically illustrated by George Radwanski. This reflects the belief that dropouts are the result of a wide range of problems presented in our brief. The solution to the dropout issue is not simple–we understand that–but rather requires a comprehensive approach that identifies the holistic role of school in today's society.

All the issues presented in our brief require the province to show its financial commitment and school boards to provide full-time leadership so as to give all Ontario students an equal opportunity to a quality education.

That ends the formal part of our presentation.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Schmidt. We have less than 10 minutes left and we have four questioners, so could we please make the questions a little more to the brief.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: A little more to the brief; I just want to talk about the first three pages. I think they are relevant and it will be noted that they were dealing with financial fairness in the two systems.

First, let me just compliment you on a very ecumenical and progressive spirit, which pervades the report. I may send off sections of it to certain boards in Ontario. They could well learn from the way you are addressing your growth in Peel and Dufferin.

I want to go into the poverty section a little bit, if I could. I am very pleased about your statements around the food programs and the after-school programs. I have always regretted that we moved away from them across the province, especially when the downturn in the economy happened recently. I think it left a lot of poor kids without any additional resources at a very tough time for them and no doubt exacerbated a lot of kids' educational outcomes because of that.

However, I want to talk about how we integrate the services in the school and the community to really get at those kids. It seems to me we have to talk about some kind of linkage there if we are going to have any real success in breaking the cycles.

This morning, Lloyd Dennis was talking about the possibility of maybe looking at the inner-city school, or whatever you want to call it–it may be quite a different phenomenon in Dufferin-Peel than it is, say, in the centre of Toronto–to turn it into a community resource centre rather than a school. We would stop calling it a school. You have to understand that you will not get parents involved. You have to change the nature of the school dramatically for them to become involved.

This is a long preamble, but it is a short question. A few days ago we had some people in who were dealing with children's aid society wards, just after somebody else had talked about the importance of parenting and parent involvement in education in the elementary panel to motivate kids. They were of course dealing with kids who had no parents or significant adults.

I am wondering if you have any thoughts about how, with poor families and single-parent-led families, as you show by your statistics, we can provide supports to enable the parents who can to assist their kids and to motivate their kids and how, when we cannot do that, we can replace that function with some other significant adult, who with our present size of classes often cannot be a classroom teacher. It would be some form of

mentoring or using senior kids from the elementary panel to do some tutoring or whatever system you think we can use to front-end load, as I am putting it, the assistance to kids in the school system to try to help them before they get to the stage where any remedial help is unlikely to be effective.

Mr. Cornack: I would like to respond in two different ways. First of all, I think there exists within co-op education, for instance, opportunities for students at the secondary level to help in mentoring in elementary schools, in terms of introducing them to the educational experience and helping in that area.

Along with that, I think we have to recognize that school for our young people is essentially a very large part of their lives and we should do everything we can within the school to help in this area. That is really one of their most important communities, so where we can help in terms of other students, I think is a very favourable approach.

The other aspect, however, is the school's role in the community. I refer to my own limited experience with Alberta, which has a concept of community schools. The funding mechanism is much different from what it is here, but it allows schools to be really integrated into the community in a more intensive way. That would open up, I feel, a lot more opportunities to use the school building, as well as personnel attached to the school, to deal with those types of issues.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Great. Thanks, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Johnston. Perhaps I should change my directions to the committee. It is rarely the questions that are long; it is usually the preamble. If we could have very short, if not nonexistent, preambles, then the rest would take care of itself.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is ridiculous. Don't even try.

1610

Mr. Jackson: I will honour your guidance, Madam Chair and not have a preamble. I will confine my words to a statement.

First, let me commend you for your brief. I was delighted this morning when Lloyd Dennis made reference to the signposts to watch for. He cautioned us that we should view our educational system or systems–he said they should attach themselves to values.

I made a brief statement about my perceptions of the separate system and about having spent considerable time in the schools in order to fully understand what you are doing in your schools. This afternoon, I am very pleased to see your brief as an extension of your work in the classroom, and so I wish only to go on record as thanking you, particularly for item 2.2, where you put in context the problems of the world, where the students themselves can participate in finding solutions. Rarely are we getting people putting it in its most appropriate context.

We are hearing that this spoon-fed society demands we go in and correct a drug problem, as it were. I cannot tell you how significant that single paragraph is, in that it speaks volumes about how we really should be looking at that problem. Rarely do we get someone coming forward with it. Likewise, you distinguish yourselves in your reference to the modelling role for women in our system, which is really quite bad in this province, and all school boards share in that lack of achievement. We hoped we would have come further.

Finally, so that I can leave on a question, because the chair will ask me to, let me, as a former trustee, thank you for item 9, which according to my clock is now a 14-year-too-late recommendation, and ask you if you feel the same criteria should apply to legislators who are dealing with the other half of the funding and the other half of the equation. It is a serious question.

Mr. Mahoney: Who is or is not full-time?

Mr. Jackson: I am full-time.

Mr. Mahoney: Is not everybody?

Mr. Jackson: I mean this seriously. I listened to a radio station this morning where a city alderman is going to be making more money than a provincial legislator, and that disturbs me when we have to become experts, not only on education but on 23 other different portfolios.

A short, quick answer would be appreciated, but a short, quick, affirmative answer would be appreciated.

Mr. Schmidt: Okay. I think trustees need to be full-time. I will be as simple as possible. I think councillors should be full-time in order to do the quality job you need.

Mr. Jackson: And provincial legislators?

Mr. Schmidt: Very definitely.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you. I am sure the chairman would love to take that back or put it into a committee recommendation. Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope you have appreciated my not getting into any preamble.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Jackson. I think I would be pushing my luck with the two remaining questioners if I asked them to make

neither statements nor preambles, but what I will do is allow five minutes for the remaining questions. Mrs. O'Neill, if you are kind to your colleague, perhaps he can get a quick one in.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like to say that you are truly a political advisory group and I appreciate the thoughtfulness of your brief in that capacity. There are two areas about which I would like to ask very specific questions. In item 2.5 on the top of folio 5 you suggest that the "curriculum should stress active participation in their wide variety of social groups." Do you have strategies within your schools to do that at any grade level? Could you just be very brief in responding?

Mr. Schmidt: Yes, we do. Our school for some time, in many ways, pioneered a retreat program and also a service program, where we bring a lot of the students to the Good Shepherd Refuge or to a number of places where they can actively live out their commitment. That is a part of our religion program.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is that general in most of your secondary schools?

Mr. Schmidt: In Dufferin-Peel it has become more so now, yes.

Mr. Cornack: May I add that in most of our schools this type of opportunity for students to at least see where involvement could occur is offered to students in a wide variety of areas. If I refer back to Bibby's work, the relevance that he talks about refers to what is being studied across a wide range of subjects and direction can be given by teachers to channel them in those areas.

Ms. Yakimishyn: I would just like to add, too, that this type of program is common also in our elementary schools.

Mr. Romanet: I might as well add my comment. From the elementary experience that arose about five years ago, in a discussion with my students, one of the common questions asked of them from their grandparents and parents, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" led to a vocation night where parents, representing the vocation that they are participating in, dress kids in various costumes and on a rotation basis the kids went from class to class and they asked candid questions about the vocation that this person represented. I think that is a perfect example of how the curriculum can be set up using parents from the community.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much. I want to ask one quick question on folio 12 because I do not think, if memory serves me correctly, that is what other groups of Catholic teachers and/or trustees have said to us regarding Bill 30 and its 10-year limitations.

First of all, do you have your board's consent on this item?

Mr. Schmidt: Oh no.

Ms. Yakimishyn: We are speaking as a local group of Catholic teachers.

Mrs. O'Neill: And OECTA provincially is not on record either as suggesting this?

Ms. Yakimishyn: Not officially on record.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They are also not on record on the other side. It was the principals and the Catholic trustees who stated that they wanted section 136(1)(a) repealed, but OECTA did not take a position.

Ms. Yakimishyn: And we would be confident–

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you for bringing me up to date Mr. Johnston. I am asking this question on your behalf.

So you are speaking basically independently and you have not got too much of a feel of how broadly your thrust is across the province with other OECTA units. Do you want to comment on that?

Mr. Schmidt: I think we can speak for only our own teachers. The history of our board is fairly indicated, as I have said before. We have about 10 per cent of our teachers as non-Catholics. Ironically, it was the funding decision of 1984 which threw all of these considerations up to the board and of course we got the OSSTA involved with it making recommendations. As I tried to point out, we are in a growing area where it is not a concern, so in some senses you can afford to be generous. At the same time, as educators, we all realize, particularly at secondary, we need good, experienced staff in these schools. You can only get them sometimes from public secondary schools. You are all aware of the teaching shortage that exists. We have mainly young teachers and we need a reserve crew that are older.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would love to speak more, but this is Mr. Mahoney's area.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mahoney, I think you have 30 seconds left.

Mr. Mahoney: I am sure you know I can get through it in 30 seconds, Madam Chairman, unlike my colleagues on the other side of this room.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I never try to; you should not either.

Mr. Mahoney: I do not intend to. Rather than go through the first part of the brief, we could have simply arranged for a trip and a tour of St. Martin's and I am sure that would have put the point across rather well.

I was curious about a couple of things. First of all, you said we need more community schools and that concept. It is my experience that your board, particularly, has led the way in community schools; Pierre Laporte being the one in my own home community where my kids had their early education. They even have a community group set up. Is that not done across Dufferin-Peel?

Ms. Yakimishyn: It is not common across the board.

1620

Mr. Cornack: If I might respond, since I was the person who introduced the concept, I think Mr. Johnston's question related more to across the province and I refer to the community school concept, with its funding and structure that is uniquely different in Alberta, I believe, than it is here.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The community-based school, is that what you mean?

Mr. Cornack: The community school as a structural unit is essentially different from schools we have here, which do reach out to the community.

Mr. Mahoney: Less and less. They do not do it enough. In fact, my criticism of the public board has often been that it is extremely difficult, or it has been in the past, to get use of those facilities in nonschool hours. They are loosening up a little bit, but the separate board has been much better.

I was under the impression–and I hope you are going to tell me I am wrong–that your board had passed a resolution saying it would not hire non-Catholic staff, either at the teaching level or any other staff level. Perhaps the difference may be that they would not hire anyone who is not prepared to transfer his or her tax support. Is that perhaps what I am thinking of?

Ms. Yakimishyn: I believe that is incorrect. In fact, it is my understanding that our director of education publicly stated that our board does not, has never and will not take that position. That was in response to a statement that came out of the Metropolitan Separate School Board, I believe.

Mr. Mahoney: I will talk to Brian myself on that and verify it, but I was led to believe that. In fact, I received some rather critical phone calls that this in fact had taken place.

Ms. Yakimishyn: It would be surprising news to us and it certainly would not be reflected in the practice of the board.

Mr. Mahoney: Just a quick comment–I know you want to move on–first of all, if I missed this, I apologize, but I did not see your position on semestering.

Before you go to that, I would just make a comment that in section 9.1, you are talking about full-time trustees. As a member of city council for nine years prior to coming here, one of our greatest frustrations at municipal election time was always the fact that the school boards were responsible for 60 per cent of the tax dollar, yet when you went to the all-candidates' meetings, they would ask questions of the mayoralty candidates and the council candidates, and if there was any time left, which there usually was not, they might ask a question of a trustee.

So until we are successful in changing the accountability, changing the recognition of the responsibility for the tax dollar and the administration of that dollar, you are going to have a lot of trouble convincing people that they should be full-time on a full-time salary. Maybe that is a chicken-and-egg situation; maybe if you make it full-time, you will be successful in convincing them of that. I am not totally sure, but I certainly agree there is a conceptual problem there and something that should be looked at.

Can you tell me where you are on semestering?

Mr. Schmidt: We did not address this. Wayne and I are secondary teachers. I think semestering is, besides the world of work, one of the most significant problems we face. I think it is a disaster.

Mr. Mahoney: Could you kind of give me a straight opinion? Do not mince words.

Mr. Schmidt: It is a disaster, largely because it has turned education as we know it, in its liberal arts sense, into a pure commodity. If we continue in this vein, ultimately we will get to the point where we will have kids cutting out of school on a regular basis for driver education during the period of time.

The fact of the matter is, as you all know, that between semestering and the world of work, schools are becoming more and more dropin centres. I can attest to that because I am in one every day. The mentality that this breeds vis-à-vis wanting to be involved in dramatic arts, in athletics, I think you will notice a significant

decline over the past 10 years of kids wanting to get involved in those areas.

I know it has advantages for other programs where we can get kids out of school, like co-operative education, but by and large it was implemented largely for the interests of the teachers' federations. Over time, as we look at it and look at its impact on the lives of our kids, it does not allow for the learning styles of the many, it allows for the learning styles of the few, in the sense that to get a handle on a subject, a student needs a full year of working away at it. We are doing two years in one with semestering and we still have not caught up. It is an intellectual speedup, in effect, and if you cannot cut it, do not bother coming in.

The direct effect it has had on our school, which has retreat programs, is that kids in grades 12 and 13 now say, "I cannot afford to be away for two or three days, sir, because I am history"–you know the expression–"if I miss three classes." That is because you have compacted so much learning time into those days.

I went to school under the other system. I enjoyed it and I was no great student, but I did find that over the year you could make it up. There is no way to make it up any more for our kids, most of whom are at the middle. If 62 per cent are voting with their feet in general level and 85 per cent in basic, I think there is a big lesson there for the committee to look at seriously.

I hope there are some studies done on this because I think it would really benefit us to get some hard data. I can give you only my visceral feeling of seeing kids come in and watching school get turned into a dropin centre. It is not just me who is reporting this. I talk to secondary teachers all over the province and that is where I am at with it.

Mr. Mahoney: That is your association's official position?

Mr. Schmidt: No, personal.

Mr. Cornack: We did not take a position on that in our brief, but if I might respond, I can relate it to 2.6 in our brief where we mention Walter Pitman's concern about interdependence, which we support wholeheartedly. It is difficult to teach and expose students to interdependence that exists within a multitude of subject areas and issues when we compartmentalize education in a semestering system the way we do, with three or four subjects intensively, to the exclusion of the others for a long period of time.

There are some subjects, depending upon how the timetable works, where they are introduced and they take them in the first semester in year 1 and do not see them again until February of year 2. It is tough to teach interdependence when you compartmentalize in that way.

Mr. Mahoney: Just one final quick comment: Is there a compromise there of the every-other-day routine? Is that something that you have looked at that might make sense?

Mr. Schmidt: It might. I have never worked under it. I have heard people who have and maybe you can get some comment from those people who have.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That will have pros and cons in it as well.

Mr. Schmidt: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: I am sure. Thanks very much.

Mr. Beer: The strength of what you are saying has not always been reflected by other teachers. I think that was an interesting comment, to put it mildly.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mahoney. I have never seen quite so much packed into 30 seconds, although I must say it was 30 seconds well spent because I found the discussion very stimulating.

Mr. Mahoney: You did not expect me to do anything else. My questions are always good and to the point.

Madam Chairman: And 90 of them.

I would very much like to thank OECTA, Dufferin-Peel unit, for your presentation today and for the very stimulating discussion you have led us into. Thank you.

Our next presentation is from Edward James, head of science for Eastwood Collegiate Institute, Kitchener.

Good afternoon, Mr. James. Welcome to our committee. You are just what we have been dying to get our hands on, a real live science teacher, so we can explore some of the comments we have heard in our committee. We particularly welcome your presentation.

We have allocated 30 minutes for the presentation. As you have seen this afternoon, that is quite meaningless. It does not seem to stop the members from asking extensive questions. I have noticed that your paper is quite comprehensive. In the interests of time, so that you would have sufficient time for members to ask questions at the end, you might want to consider highlighting some of the more urgent areas.

1630

EDWARD S. JAMES

Mr. James: Thanks very much for providing me with this opportunity today. I would like to

apologize for the rather unorthodox footnoting that I have put in my paper. Just getting the paper in on time proved to be a bit of a nightmare for me and so I had to take a few shortcuts. I have a pretty low-budget operation, looking at what has been going on here today.

Most of the media comments I have seen or read regarding submissions to this committee seem to be related to the administration of the educational process. However, the fundamental problems in education in Ontario today cannot be solved by simply rearranging what we are already doing.

Consider my role as a classroom teacher of science. My basic task is to help my students work towards achievement of the aims of the science curriculum and also the 13 goals of education. Science teachers are presently frustrated in their attempts to do this because there is no effective strategy for relating the goals of education to the daily classroom activities of the students or for evaluating their progress towards these goals.

In addition, no integrated sequence of subject matter has really been worked out in detail that can be used to relate all the different subject areas and programs to one another in a useful way. As I mention in my paper, the goals of education have not been translated into classroom objectives as the Ministry of Education suggested they would be.

We have just reached a critical stage as far as the development of an educational structure in Ontario is concerned. In the last 30 years, research in curriculum design and development for most subject areas has brought us to the point where we can do a pretty thorough job of developing a course in the specific subject area for advanced-level courses. The new science guideline is a good example of this. However, problems arise when we also try to ensure that the course supports the goals of education. The goals are such vague statements of intent that it is difficult to relate them to specific subject content in the course.

It is human nature to do the easiest task first. Now, unfortunately, whether we like it or not, we have to get down to the task of specifying learning outcomes that can be used to evaluate a student's progress towards the goals of education and find a way of including them in the school curriculum. Developing appropriate learning outcomes will be a difficult task, but we can no longer pay lipservice to them as we have in the past.

It is not good enough to state that all students must possess basic literacy and numeracy skills and expect somehow that it will magically happen. We are going to have to agree on reasonable levels of achievement towards these goals at several stages in a student's education. We also have to decide what the legitimate role of each of the subject disciplines is in terms of its contribution to the goals of education.

Now for some basic comments on OSIS. The first of my three major concerns with OSIS has been referred to; namely, the lack of structure. The second concern is with the number of credits required for graduation. General-level students have great difficulty obtaining this number of credits in four years. I have some data that you might want to get after this presentation on what is happening in Waterloo county in terms of the number of credits students require before they start grade 11 and before they start grade 12 and how many of our kids just are not going to make it in four years.

My third concern is with the evaluation standards in Ontario. There is a public perception that students in Ontario are not achieving at the same level in the sciences as those in other countries. In my opinion, this is an unreasonable perception. The conditions under which our students are prepared for these tests are quite different to those of other countries. If it is important for the health of our educational system that we are seen to compare equally with other countries, then perhaps a partial form of standardized testing, such as that done in British Columbia, should be implemented.

My main reason for advocating the return of a limited form of standardized testing in Ontario is to encourage the rapid development of adequate standards for the learning outcomes related to the goals of education. The need for standardized testing as far as the subject disciplines is concerned is probably more political than educational.

I have some comments that I can make on evaluation on those international tests. I was on the ministry writing team for the Ontario assessment instrument pool for physics, when we wrote all the test items for that, so I have some background on that.

I would like to make some comments now on streaming. I see no real, practical alternative to the present system of streaming within the next few years, and I thus disagree in the short term with the recommendations of the Radwanski report.

Although mastery learning has its merits, it is equally damaging to a student's feelings of self-worth to be trying to master material that a student beside him or her who is 10 years younger is mastering with ease. Perhaps Radwanski's approach would be more appropriate when we have massive unemployment in about 30 years' time. We can then have sufficient numbers of teachers to provide teaching conditions approximating individualized study for each student.

The major problem with the streaming of students is the inappropriateness of the courses of study. The problem is most acute with the general-level courses. The difference between basic- and advanced-level students is so great that there is a very clear difference between the structure of the courses. Unfortunately, we have not yet come to grips with the difference between general- and advanced-level courses. In science, at least, educators must find a way to break free from the straitjacket of the seemingly sacred blocks of content that presently stifle any attempts to provide useful courses for general-level students.

Some other considerations to do with apprenticeship schemes: I was fortunate enough to have a five-and-a-half-year student apprenticeship in England with the Bristol Aeroplane Co., and my experience as an engineer before I started teaching and as a teacher in community college and in the technical programs in secondary schools makes me realize that we have to do something better than we are doing to provide significant ground for the training of the thousands of technicians and technologists we are going to need in the future.

Another concern that I did not mention in my paper is the need to encourage more girls to continue studies in science. We have to get more female science teachers into our classrooms. I am lucky enough to have an assistant head of science who is a female, and there is no doubt that it has made a big difference to the way the girls in my science classes respond.

I have some comments on the 11-plus exam in England. You might be interested in that if you have time–related to girls, that is.

As far as professional development for teachers is concerned, science teachers and probably those in other subject areas are presently in an overload situation. The curriculum research, development and implementation process developed by the ministry and the boards of education may look very good on paper, but 95 per cent of the work ends up being done by the classroom teacher.

The introduction of the new subject guidelines under OSIS has created a situation where many teachers simply cannot find time to do all the required curriculum development. In addition, a large number do not have the background in curriculum to deal with it. Although they have mastery of the subject content, there is a real need to upgrade the curriculum skills. We must find a way to provide time and resources for teachers to develop these, especially the new teachers who will soon flood into the system.

Now I would like to discuss briefly a model for organizing education in Ontario. This is the model I talked about in the second part of my brief.

If we assume that the philosophical basis underlying the present goals of education is appropriate, what is the required directive in the future? My view is that we need to develop a long-term plan based on a new strategy which allows us to teach effectively towards the goals of education.

As outlined in my discussion paper, four of the key features of the strategy should be:

1. That it provide a practical model for directly relating the goals of education to classroom activities in any program or subject area.

2. That it must be proactive and based on a flexible long-term plan.

3. That the strategy and its underlying philosophy of education be endorsed by all major political parties.

4. That all aspects of the education system should be regulated by evaluation procedures that assess the education program, educators and the learners themselves.

The model suggested in my paper outlines an approach that provides a large degree of accountability in terms of the goals of education. Very importantly, it also provides a mechanism for assessing the legitimate claims of each of the subject disciplines in the total school curriculum. The approach suggested by Whitehead for structuring the curriculum in terms of the life experiences of the student and for integrating the different subject areas can also be achieved by the model I am proposing.

If you would perhaps look at the rough diagram, figure 1, I would like to discuss the structure of the model just a bit. That is on page 18.

To develop an overall structure for general education, we need to look at the total school curriculum from the goals of education point of

view. What I mean by this is that we need to stand back from all the subject disciplines and look at the major areas of human knowledge, such as the humanities, the natural sciences, the social sciences and so on, and from these select those aspects that can be effectively introduced into general education.

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At the present moment, I feel we always seem to do it the other way around. I may not be expressing this very clearly, but for me the question of the viewing point is critical to the development of the most effective education system. It was to achieve this change of viewpoint that I developed block B of the model you are looking at. That is this sort of block here with the three little boxes.

It consists of three parts: the goal structure of the learner, the goal/topic lists and the goals of education evaluation database. This part of the total model could be called a fuzzy model in that it does not lay everything out in nice, neat, mutually exclusive parts. However, it is fuzzy by necessity.

The human brain operates on many levels simultaneously, and so it is not practical to try to set up a neat analytical model. Fuzzy models have a very respectable history, in fact. They are used by scientists, engineers and economists all the time.

This part of the model, part B, is useful for four reasons: (1) It provides a means for directly relating the goals of education to the classroom activities of the learner; (2) it provides a means to identify different subjects and contribute in an integrated way to the goals of education; (3) it provides a means to identify the legitimate claims of each sort of discipline, and thus it will be possible to challenge, in a more defensible way, the rather nebulous claims of some of them; (4) it also provides a basis for evaluating the progress of the learner in terms of the goals of education.

Now please look at the goal structure of the learner, figure 2, page 19.

The goal structure of the learner provides a means for changing the unstructured list of goals of education into a framework that describes the needs of both the learner and the society in which he or she lives. Some cells in the matrix are obviously far more complex than others. The one, for instance, in this section here where there is individual self-realization and basic literacy and so on would obviously be quite massive in its extent.

It is at this level, though, that we can start integrating the learning theory essential for developing a sound sequence of learning experiences for the learner. It is important to note that no specific subject areas are identified in this matrix of goals. Thus it forces educators to look at the complete package.

Please now look at figure 3, the one with the list of topics.

The goal/topic list provides the link between the real-life experiences of the learner and the classroom. If you look at figure 3, you can see the list of topics generated by students, parents and educators in this little brainstorming thing that I did years ago. They are the things they feel are important to them in the area of public health. The topics in this one list can be easily related to at least eight different subject areas.

The combination of the goal structure of the learner and the goal/topic list provides the means to identify the legitimate claims of each subject discipline, because right here you can nail down what you think students should be doing and also develop completely different courses for advanced-level, general-level and basic-level students.

We have known for decades that the general-level programs are inappropriate. Every time there has been a change in a science guideline, everyone bemoans the fact that developing general-level courses is a major problem, but we have not creatively tried to think of a way of solving it.

We perhaps have to ask ourselves who the slow learners are: the general-level students or the curriculum planners who continue to develop these inappropriate courses time after time? I am sure that by using a model similar to this, defensible, exciting science courses could be developed that would combine the subject content in completely new ways. Further, I am sure that if we check the science content covered in the new course, very little, if anything, of a critical nature would be lost as far as the science is concerned.

The other parts of the model relating to the structure of the science program, developing the unit of study in a course, the supporting evaluation database and the curriculum database are pretty straightforward. There will be a need to develop an integrated structure of goals for each subject area to tie in with the goals of education, but this would be done at the same time as the learning outcomes for the goals of education were done.

My comments on the other uses of the model in terms of professional development for teachers and the development of an integrated research

program for education throughout the province are very important. We have to find ways to help teachers develop these skills and to encourage them to stay interested in teaching throughout their career.

When I started talking to other educators about this model several years ago, most were supportive but felt that the scale of the project was prohibitive. With the computer facilities we now have available, such concerns are no longer reasonable. The extremely flexible databases we now have make models like this quite feasible. All we require is the will to get started.

Thank you very much for the time you have given me today. I will be glad to answer your questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. James. I am glad to see you have allowed 14 minutes for questions, which is good, because we have four members who have already indicated they want to be on the list: Mr. McLean, Mr. Keyes, Mr. Johnston and Mr. Beer.

Mr. McLean: Do you underscore the need to return to some form of standardized province-wide testing?

Mr. James: I suggested that mainly for my own personal ends, in that I think we should be developing courses in all subject areas that lead towards the goals of general education, and the only way we can do that is by establishing learning outcomes related to the goals of education at different levels–let's say at grade 3, grade 6, grade 8, grade 10, grade 12 and so on. Now, if we do that, in order to get the kind of data required to have some stability across the province, we are going to have to do some kind of province-wide testing. The subject areas could also come within that as well, and we would also do it in terms of the actual science, English, history or whatever. In terms of doing it just for science and not doing it for the goals of general education, I would have to wonder why we do it.

In Competing in the New Global Economy, there is a table at the back here in the "Striving for Excellence in Education" section. There is a table here, "Scores for Final Year, Secondary School," and it is in math. When I looked through this a little while ago, I saw that the three countries that are consistently in the top are Hong Kong, Japan and England. Others creep in now and again, but those three are usually at the top, and Ontario is about a third of the way down or so.

Now, I was educated in England and so I know what we go through to get there. In England you have country-wide exams, the ordinary-level certificate and the advanced-level certificate, and although there are comprehensive schools there now, essentially the same procedure is followed. It may be changing just now, I think; I was talking to a teacher about it today. But up until probably the last couple years, that is what has been going on.

When I was going through my high school career at grammar school, we finished the course quite early. You spent the last three months training for the all-England exams. Now, you can bet your bottom dollar that the content that is in those courses of study is aligned very closely to the content that is in these international studies. I am sure the same kind of thing goes on in Hong Kong. In fact, Hong Kong is probably based on the British model. Japan is not, I know. But, in any case, if you look at the difference in Japan and Hong Kong and England, it probably is due to work ethic–you know, spending 15 hours on the job every day, that sort of thing. If you look at the way we approach our courses in Ontario and then compare countries like that, we are comparing apples and oranges.

Mr. McLean: Okay, thank you. The last question I have is on your statement: "The present system of streaming students into basic-, general- and advanced-level courses will probably have to continue in some form or other." What do you mean in that sentence by "in some form or other?" I mean, it will either have to exist or not.

Mr. James: Yes, okay. What I mean is this: As a practising teacher, I cannot see being able to function effectively and cover courses of study if I have to have advanced-, general- and basic-level kids in my class. If I go the Radwanski approach and go for mastery learning, I will have a huge age range in my class, and I am not sure which is more damaging: to have a kid, say in my grade 9 class, who is 18 years old and another kid who is 13 years old, both doing the same thing and the 13-year-old doing it much better than the 18-year-old, or streaming as we presently have it. I think we have to look at this whole thing very, very carefully.

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My comment about the short term: I think some form of mastery learning is possible if we have smaller classes and if we can go towards more individualized study approaches in school. I was not being facetious about the 30 years' time, because if you start thinking about what is going to happen with automation and so on, we are going to be having a tough time keeping people in work, and maybe all the bright people

who should be doing other things can help young people do the job.

Mr. Keyes: I just want to follow the same line on streaming, etc., and ask you to give a few more comments. But let's follow Mr. McLean's question. Looking at your model, I tend to think it is designed for the mastery learning concept. I do not know whether you intend that, but it just seems to smack of that. I wondered if that is what you intend by it.

Then I wanted to look at how you see improving the course content for the general level. What are the factors in it that would make it more relevant to those students? Maybe you would also touch on your failure, as you said, to convince your cohorts who have sat on committees with you to accept your approach to curriculum design.

Mr. James: Okay.

Mr. Keyes: The first was on mastery. I have a feeling that your model looks to be totally the approach of mastery learning.

Mr. James: I try to be a practical person. This stuff interests me a lot. We have to move from where we are to where we want to go. I do not think it is possible to move from one to the other immediately, but if we are serious about the goals of general education and the fact that we want people to achieve them, we have to find some way of doing it. If we identify certain things we think a student should be able to do for goal 3 or whatever it is, how are we going to find out whether he does it or not? We have to test him. That is where mastery learning would come in.

Possibly you could do something like this: You could have an amalgam of mastery learning for the goals of education material and some other kind of achievement testing for the subject areas. That may be the approach for that.

I think if people in Ontario really do mean that the goals of education are worth while, that we should achieve them and that we are going to have accountability towards that, then we have to have some way of measuring that. We cannot just measure at the end of grade 12. We have to make sure our kids are coming along all the way along. We have to ask how they are doing at the end of grade 3, grade 6, grade 8 and so on; otherwise, we cannot suddenly spring it on them in grade 12 and say: "Sorry, guys. You just don't make it as a citizen." That does not seem very fair. That is why I think mastery learning is an important component if we do really mean to go for the goals of education.

Mr. Keyes: Would you give some support, then, but not too much, to the sampling that is recommended at grades 3, 6 and 8, as an example, the pilot projects to provide some benchmarks at the present? You do not seem too enthusiastic for that.

Mr. James: Actually, it is interesting. We have one like that in grade 11 chemistry and grade 12 physics this year across the province. I am kind of worried about that because the test was done in May. It was on the whole year's work. Most of my kids will not be taking an exam; they are exempt. We give the test in late May. They are up to their ears in projects in history, geography and everything else and they have to concentrate on that; they also have tests for us in physics and chemistry and so on, and along comes this ministry test that does not count for anything in their entire year's work. We were told not to do that.

What are you going to study for if you are a student? Are you going to go home and study for days for a test that means absolutely zero, except that Ontario might look good? That is crazy. I think the results are going to be very suspect indeed.

I think major testing is fine if you set it up so that, when you test, the kids know what they are supposed to be tested on and they have had some reason to review for the whole thing. I would hate to have this where we all taught the same thing all through the year, but if we did something like that, maybe we could get into a situation where we could, say, test mechanics and the like at Christmas–that sort of thing. But as it is now, I honestly think the results are very suspect.

That bothers me, you see, because those results will come out and we will say, "Here we go again. The science teachers in Ontario are doing a lousy job," and it is not true. It is just like this stuff with the international testing. Our students are much better than that. It is just that the testing procedures are different; we are comparing apples and oranges and we have to recognize that fact.

Mr. Keyes: Do you want to make any comment about your participation in it?

Mr. James: The OAIP?

Mr. Keyes: Well, that one, and you have said you are on a committee trying to revamp the general course at the moment and you mentioned the lack of being able to convince cohorts of that.

Mr. James: No, it is not a question of that. I do not have to convince them. The people on the committee are all responsible people and they want to do a good job for students, but you must understand that most of the guideline is out now

and it has a certain structure and, for practical reasons, it cannot be changed much.

What has tended to happen over the last few decades is that certain blocks of content have become established in science and they are a bit like playing cards. Then there are other cards inside the blocks of content; so what you tend to do when you redesign a guideline is sort of shuffle the cards around a bit, and if you are getting pressures from above, like the universities, that we have to do this, this and this, you shove some things down and bring some things up.

You have to wonder where the spiral curriculum is going on here, because sometimes things are shoved down and up which do not really make sense. We are trapped by these blocks of content and we cannot get out of it, because that is the way it has always been. It is this idea of hegemony. We are surrounded by and we are immersed in what has been happening for the last few decades; we cannot get out of it.

I think what we need to do would be to structure subjects like this. We can say: "For public health, kids need to know this, this and this. For economic competence, they need to know this and this." Maybe we can take all these little topic lists together and pick out all the physics that is in them and ask, "How can I fit this together to make a real neat course for my kids?" I would be supporting the goals of general education and maybe making a super course. Then if I took all the content out and I put it in my neat little packages that exist presently, there would not be much missing, because I put a few topics in here and there and you would have a great course.

I really think that is possible. I would like to break that mould, but I am just me.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. James. It has been a very provocative and stimulating presentation, coming at things from a different angle than others have. I tend to think your notion of the lack of connection between the goals and the structures in curriculum is an appropriate one for us to have.

Let me be provocative back, if I may, and take a totally different tack. It can be argued, and is argued by some people, as a matter of fact, that our education system is phenomenally successful, if you look at it longitudinally. Compared with just 15 per cent of people who went on to post-secondary education in the early 1960s, we are now at 35 per cent of the population going on to post-secondary. We have 65 per cent of our population now finishing grade 12, which 30 years ago would have been unheard of. If you really look at the points of failure of the system in the hardest terms, the most glaring things are that kids from lower socioeconomic groupings tend to do badly in the system, native kids do very badly in the system and a couple of ethnic groups can be readily picked out and identified as not doing well within our system.

If somebody approached you with that point and then said, "How is your structure going to change that?" I do not see anything in it which specifically means it is going to do anything for those groups that are presently left out in the system while the others are all, in one way or another, seeming to succeed in general terms.

Mr. James: I think that is fair, but I guess my approach to the problem you presented in your original statement in the paper, the Globe and Mail I picked up in March or something, was to comment on the organization as it existed rather than on the socioeconomic conditions that create the problems. I was looking at it purely from an educational point of view and trying to see how I could make it better, because as a teacher I can only affect certain things. I can only affect the kids when they are in front of me and I try to do as good a job as I can. I cannot help it if they did not have breakfast in the morning. Maybe the government can, but I cannot. I cannot help it if they have been disadvantaged and so on, but I can help by giving them a super course.

Perhaps I could develop a grade 12 general-level physics course where I taught them the physics of the human body, instead of doing a dibble-dabble in mechanics and a dibble-dabble in light and trying to pull it all together. I cannot really do centre of gravity because that is statics and that is an optional unit and we will not have time for the optional unit. If you can make it come alive experientially for them, maybe they will want to come to school just that little bit more and maybe they will not take those jobs or maybe they will just hang on that little bit longer.

1700

Let me give you those figures on kids leaving. OSIS is responsible for, I think, some problems here. You have to get 30 credits in four years. We got some data. The principal did it in our school in Waterloo county. I will probably be crucified for giving you these figures, but anyway, here we go. This is off the record or something.

At the beginning of grade 11, 33 per cent of the kids before they start grade 11, even if they got all the credits in grade 11 and all the credits in grade 12, would have fewer than 30 credits. That is at the beginning of grade 11. And 46 per cent of

the kids, if they get their credits in grade 11 and grade 12, will just have 30 credits.

By the time they get to grade 12 for general level, before they start grade 12, 55 per cent, if they get all their credits in grade 12, cannot get the 30 credits to graduate, while 83 per cent, if they get all their credits in grade 12, will just get 30 credits. Based on their record of failure, a lot of those 83 per cent are not going to make the 30 credits.

I have serious concern about OSIS in terms of the number of credits it asks for in general level. That is not really answering your question, but I do not think the question is one that I, as an educator, can honestly give an answer to. It would be an opinion. It would not be anything I could do anything about.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What I was trying to lead you to, unsuccessfully, was the presumption that you make and then base the rest of your work on, that the goals which you have established for education are adequate. Then you set up a new structure for meeting those goals, finally, which is a good thing. I guess I am questioning whether the goals for education are all that we need.

The individual self-actualization ones we have are good, it seems to me, but I am wondering if there are not other goals for education that need to be stated realistically. Again, as you say, you cannot feed the kids yourself, although I do tend to think that the high school and public school systems should be doing that. No matter how clever your course is, if the kids are hungry they are not going to be paying much attention to it, but that is another issue. I guess I am struggling with the notion of getting some collective goals as well as individual goals and not knowing just how to go about it.

Mr. James: It is interesting you should mention that because when I did all these little goals and subgoals that I have here, for every subgoal I had a little page, like this, with the topics on it. When I did that–and I looked at the goals in general education–I did not think everything I had in my little list of goals was covered by the goals of general education, to be honest.

That is why I put in that little bit in my report about how it would be interesting to use a technique like this, having some process for evaluating the goals of general education. I think we would find ourselves weak in what the goals say about what society expects of people. There are legitimate goals of education for the individual functioning in society. I think we probably sell ourselves as a society a little short in our goals for education.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. James, for a very stimulating and provocative presentation today. We are very pleased that you took the time and the effort. It is quite obvious from your brief that you did take a lot of time and effort to come before our committee today.

Mr. James: I appreciate that.

Madam Chairman: Our final presentation today will be by Paul Costello and group. I should not say welcome back to the committee. I should say welcome to Mr. Costello because we have seen him in the committee room quite often as an observer.

I will just give you a moment for your group to be seated. I think this delegation must have known something we did not. They had right on their presentation that it was October 4 at 5 p.m. I think perhaps that was their original presentation time. We then pushed them up to 4:30, and lo and behold, here we are at 5:05.

PAUL COSTELLO
DANA SACCOCCIO
BILL SACCOCCIO

Mr. Costello: I was going to make the comment that it was nice to be right on time.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this to you. I think the work you are doing is extremely significant for the future of education. In your deliberations, we are going to ask you to go beyond the present clientele in our schools, such as it exists. We want you to examine the total community. We want you to consider the role that the actual school facility itself and the services it provides have as an impact on education.

We need to build upon the present system and to make educational services available to people of all ages, from pre-junior kindergarten through to senior citizens. We feel that education is not only for those who are in the system but also for those who are not. Education is for those who can be there full-time and for those who wish to be there part-time. We feel there needs to be a closer co-operation between those who provide education and those who provide education-related services already in the community.

We feel it is extremely important to go beyond a review of the system, such as to semester or not, or the relevance of the present high school curriculum, etc., and to examine how we can best meet the needs of our communities on a 24-hour basis; how to bring all services together

We feel it is extremely important to go beyond a review of the system, such as to semester or not, or the relevance of the present high school curriculum, etc., and to examine how we can best meet the needs of our communities on a 24-hour basis; how to bring all services together on a one-stop basis; how to be more efficient and effective on both a service aspect and on a financial basis; and how we can move our educational system into the next century in a truly meaningful way. It is our view that one of the critical components must be the actual school facility itself.

We feel there is a need for a new-style school facility which will bring available community services into the school setting for a more effective use of these resources which are already available. The community needs greater access to our schools and the school community needs access to all available resources to meet the changing times. The public needs to find an easier way to access all available services. The community itself can add to and enhance the programs and systems presented in our schools. We need to make our school setting the real world in as many ways as possible. So often we hear, "Now that they've graduated, they're entering the real world." Let's bridge that gap and make our school community vibrant and real.

On page 3, I am talking briefly about the needs of the 1990s. Our education system has to respond to pressures for a 12-month school, for night school, for high-tech programs, computer-based learning centres, for English-as-a-second-language courses, basic literacy courses, for the provision of services in nonschool settings and for a nontraditional clientele, for services to high numbers of dropouts, for child care services, for improved liaison with alternative institutions of learning, with societal agencies and with the world of work.

I mention a number of the areas in the next few pages where we can actually provide service to our students. As has been mentioned in other presentations today and earlier in the summer, the need to provide beyond the curriculum is so important for our kids.

As the present system tries to respond to these needs, a lot of pressure is placed upon the school and upon the individual teacher to do too much. The school system attempts to deal with many needs in a positive and effective way, but it is more and more difficult to do so. Teachers are asked to teach the basics and, at the same time, provide services for which they are not trained or for which the time factor is critical.

Our proposal: We wish to bring to your attention a proposal advanced by the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board regarding a multi-use, community-based school facility. This multi-use facility would encompass a Catholic secondary school, a public library branch, a community theatre, a fitness centre, a child care centre, a seniors' centre and community office space. We feel the close proximity of each of these components, one to another, would be to the mutual benefit of all.

1710

At the bottom of the page I mention that it is very much in keeping with Treasurer Robert Nixon's statement in the last budget that "new school facilities will be adaptable to other community uses." Once the population declines a bit, you can enhance the school community by developing these facilities even more fully.

On page 8, while we are proposing this multi-use, community-based facility for a high school to be built in Maple–construction to begin hopefully in September 1989–this concept has practical application to many other areas in the province. It would be ideal for beginning to gather a community which already exists in downtown Toronto, but needs a focus. It would be ideal for a community such as the francophone community as it grows and develops. It would suit the needs of communities in northern Ontario as they grow with the times.

It has very many exciting elements to it. It is a real people-based centre, for a community as opposed to a commercially based centre. It would enhance programs offered in the particular location where it is being offered and it would also be cost-effective in the long run, as it would many facilities together that would ordinarily be offered throughout an area. This way they are at a one-stop base and also, the services provided would not need services to get into them.

I am going to turn to our three architects who are with us. I have Paul Weppler and Dana Saccoccio to my right and Bill Saccoccio to my left. They are going to give you an overview of the actual physical facility we are proposing.

Ms. D. Saccoccio: The committee has our package in front of it. The first page we will refer to later in the presentation–it is not numbered–is the 10th page, with a chart showing "Program/ Area Summary."

The changing focus of educational methods and philosophies, sophisticated technology available to learning at very early ages, complex

societal needs of children, adults and families, population shifts, etc. have made shared-use facilities a high priority and have not spared architectural form. There is a demand for response to the times by school architecture for buildings where society in general, and youth in particular, may now spend one third of their life years attending traditional educational facilities.

As we begin to consider education as a lifelong process, the community school is a very timely concept, serving the needs not only of youth but of the complete family unit. Community schools will radically redefine the educational presence in the neighbourhood by a combination of facilities in one location, with emphasis on education as a total community process.

Let's look at the cover page of the package. Our concept is based on three components, academic at the centre and recreation and assembly on either side, which presently exist in today's educational pedagogy and programs. By careful planning and organization of future schools, these three basic components can be effectively offered to the community as a whole, and not only achieve a cost-effective and socially responsive facility, but more importantly, one that will encourage socialization from an early age.

Our plan for the Maple facility encompasses the three basic components by amalgamating and organizing community facilities on one site. Practically, this concept, which combines a secondary school, public library, theatre, fitness centre, child care centre, seniors' centre and community social and health offices depends on cross-ministry support.

If you refer to the table I mentioned, it describes the amount of space or building area that the Ministry of Education typically would fund for a secondary school program under "grantable area." So the first column, "program," describes what we are trying to include and achieve in a community school. The second column would give the total area of each of those facilities.

Under "grantable area," as I have just said, it would indicate what the Ministry of Education would presently fund for those areas. For example, for a double gymnasium, they would fund 740 square metres. We are proposing two double gymnasiums–we will explain how that would work with the community when we show the plans–so the nongrantable area, or the area we are looking for through other ministries or cross-ministry funding, would be 740 square metres. Without going through the whole table, you can see how it would work in each area. The ratio at the end of the page indicates it is approaching 50 per cent Ministry of Education and funding from other ministries.

If you turn to our plans, the ground floor plan, the library still remains the focal point of the school. We have organized the three basic components–recreation on this side of the plan, academic at the centre, and assembly on this side–along a lateral axis, with a public library of a regional type at the centre.

Without going through every part of the plan and showing where the gymnasiums and classrooms are, etc., we would like to point out and emphasize the importance of all these facilities being under one roof. If you could imagine the scenario of a stand-alone day care centre versus a day care centre included in a facility of this type, you can see that the children in the day care centre–or as another example, the seniors in the senior centre–in a stand-alone building would not have these other facilities available to them in those buildings. For example, the children in the day care centre have a library of a regional type with a children's section available to them on a daily basis. They do not have to go out of the building to access a facility of that type.

The other important issue this building type addresses is the short hours and the noncost-effective buildings that are only occupied for half a day or five days a week, such as a school. Consider a school being occupied from eight o'clock in the morning until five o'clock at night. Possibly it offers a gymnasium to the community for its use, and when they come, maybe the doors are still locked. This facility would offer more to the community than just that.

If you take a library as an example, if you visit a library during a weekday when most people are probably working, you may find those would be the nonpeak hours of that library. The library is probably being used after work hours and on weekends, whereas in a school situation, that library would be used on a weekday when public libraries are virtually empty. If we combine the two facilities, we can offer a broader scope of facility to the students and the community.

In the case of the two gymnasiums–one being here and the other here–during the day, one gymnasium could be made available to people who are not working, to the community, and one gymnasium could be used for the school. During nonschool hours, both gymnasiums can be made available to the community, after school hours, on weekends, etc.

We are not trying to have a facility of a broader scope available only to students during school hours. It would be available at all times to the total community. We feel this would bring the parents of students into the facility, make the family unit closer and make parents more aware of what their children are doing in the school.

In nonschool hours, if you could imagine a family coming to this building, children of different age groups and adults could make use of the different facilities. For example, if parents were coming to a fitness class and had a small child, they could make use of the day care centre. Older children may decide they are going to make use of the library. There could be a theatre performance going on at the other end.

Similarly, such areas such as a theatre could be used for community meetings. They may not necessarily be used specifically or only for theatre performances, so there could be multi-use of these facilities.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that this concept is very dependent on cross-ministry support. The present Ministry of Education funding system would not accommodate a facility of this scope or size.

Mr. Costello: Just to conclude overall, the ministries that would be involved would be as follows: the ministries of Citizenship, Community and Social Services, Culture and Communications, Education, Health, Municipal Affairs, Skills Development, Tourism and Recreation and women's issues, so it is not just one or two, but several.

We sent a letter to the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) back in July and asked him to consider this type of proposal and maybe initiate a meeting with the various ministries. The board received a letter back from him last week which indicated a positive interest in this type of school. We requested it on a pilot basis, but obviously we think it has application and should apply to almost any area in the province.

That is our presentation, so thanks for listening.

Madam Chairman: Thanks, Mr. Costello. It is always interesting to see how various delegations are creative and innovative in trying to fit their agenda into ours. I noticed that you did so on page 9, so you just squeaked in under the wire.

Mr. Furlong: The concept you present is actually one that has some appeal. I am wondering, having sort of looked at this kind of thing before, whether you have ever considered adding a residential component to it, particularly as housing is a major issue now. We have situations, and it has been suggested to me that one of the ways in which a community centre like this can function is that it could be complete if it had a residential component with it, maybe for senior citizens, or others. I am wondering how you feel about that kind of suggestion.

Mr. Costello: I have no problem with that whatsoever. It might vary from one area to another. In some senses, maybe in an area where there are people who are homeless, for example, you might be able to offer a centre for those particular people. In another area, where there is a large number of senior citizens, sure. We have not included that specifically, but that is implied if you extend and suit it to the particular community.

Another source of community service might also be a medical centre. We have not put that in.

Mr. Furlong: When you said "community office space," I was assuming things like that, such as public health centres and offices.

Mr. Costello: Yes. We just did not make it as specific as that, but we are saying that application comes according to the particular community. I would see no problem with housing. In fact, I would encourage it.

Mr. Furlong: Given that, you see no difficulty with a 10-storey building or a seven-storey building on top of a school area?

Mr. B. Saccoccio: As a matter of fact, we made a presentation to a group in Toronto where such a thing occurred in a very restrictive site. We were proposing something along these lines to them. At the same time, we had to house their people on that same piece of property. We had developed a scheme that was going to rise about five to six storeys in height, along with the school facility, so we had looked into that particular aspect.

1720

Mr. Furlong: I assume, finally, that the school portion of this building would be easily adaptable for other uses at the end of its school life.

Mr. Costello: Exactly, and that is one of the great values of having different facilities such as those together. I know one of the problems, as has been well stated, is that, for example in North York, when the population declines, what do you do with an empty school? In this case, it is very easily adaptable to just extending these services.

Madam Chairman: Before you go, I have a question as well. As you may remember, I attended one of the meetings that you held where you made a presentation of your project. Mr.

Elliot, one of my colleagues, happened to be there as well. He made a comment to you that the size you had for, I believe, the standard classrooms, in his estimation, as a former teacher, was extremely small. I wonder if you have done any further consultation with people in the teaching profession to get their feedback and to make sure, if this proposal is adopted, that it meets the needs of a large number of students who will have to adapt to it, because the first priority has to be the school.

Mr. Costello: Right. That is a very good question. We have met with Walt Elliot since then. This is a proposal, and it is not finely tuned yet, so we are subject to adapting it to that particular process, and we are going to be going out with him to a couple of schools. It is an extremely valuable point that he made, and we can do that.

Ms. D. Saccoccio: But the size of the classroom that you see under the school program is the size that is presently funded by the Ministry of Education. We have tried to use its model for the school so that it is in line, and then the ministry would supplement the other facilities. That is not to say that a classroom should not be larger, but we have used that to develop a program and come to the end size of the building.

Madam Chairman: So the 70 square metres would be the size of a standard classroom.

Ms. D. Saccoccio: That is right, as it exists now.

Madam Chairman: That is interesting. To me, it seems like a very small room when I try to fit 35 squirming students in it.

Ms. D. Saccoccio: That would be a standard classroom where they would teach history or languages, but an art room or a science room would be larger than that. Theatre arts would be another thing on its own. When they say "standard classroom," it does not encompass all the subject areas.

Mr. Costello: Teachers have been saying for quite a while that class sizes should be smaller too.

Madam Chairman: I gather that right now you are basically after approval in principle, and then you will be working with various groups to refine it.

Mr. Costello: That is right.

Mr. Beer: Just for the record, in addition to the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board, I believe you also have been talking with the Metropolitan Separate School Board.

Mr. Costello: Yes.

Mr. Beer: Are they both interested in a similar fashion?

Mr. Costello: Emphatically, yes.

Mr. Beer: So the key element, in a sense, that you are after right now, with the Ministry of Education as sort of the lead player, is trying to get some of these other ministries involved so that can go forward. But I take it the school itself could proceed for 1989–

Mr. Costello: Yes.

Mr. Beer: –but ideally accepted in the sense that these other things could develop from that central school.

Mr. Costello: That is right. We know that we are going to build a high school, for example, in Maple, and there are other areas where there will be high schools. That is for sure. We are interested in getting the process really going in discussions with those other ministries so that in fact when approval comes for a high school, we do not have to slow that process down.

We may have to build in components so we can effect it but, for example, with York region separate, we have already made a deal that we will get 20 acres as opposed to the traditional 17 acres. We would accommodate those extra facilities that way. The town of Vaughan has been very much in approval of the project and has endorsed it by means of a vote in the council, and the York Region separate board has stated very clearly that its preference is for that type of school. We are getting a lot of support, and we feel it should be known by others.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Costello. We appreciate the fact that you and your colleagues came down to make the presentation today.

Mr. Costello: We appreciate it too, and I must say I did enjoy the meetings in the summertime. There is an awful lot of good work that is being done and we have a lot to sift through, but I think it will provide a real framework for education.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

The select committee on education shall stand adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, committee room 1.

The committee adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
E-19	E-985	2	34	Education, city of Etobicoke; Ken Maxted,
E-19	E-988	2	21	**Mr. Maxted:** There are two general concepts
E-19	E-992	2	37	**Mr. Maxted:** This is election year, you
E-19	E-994	1	1	**Mr. Maxted:** I was just thinking, Richard,
E-19	E-994	1	6	**Mr. Maxted:** Yes. So I am all for social
E-19	E-1000	1	47	**Mr. Maxted:** We are putting three school
E-19	E-1044	1	36	

Maxted, Rev. Ken, Chairman, Board of Education for the Borough of East York

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Hansard
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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Organization of the Education Process



First Session, 34th Parliament
Wednesday, October 5, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, October 5, 1988

The committee met at 10:11 a.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: I would like to welcome you to this session of the select committee on education as we continue in our review of the organization of the education process in Ontario. We are pleased to welcome for our first presentation today, Mr. Chris Tolley. Welcome to the committee, Mr. Tolley. If you would perhaps start by introducing your companions for the purpose of Hansard and then begin your presentation. We have allocated 30 minutes as your presentation time and we are hoping that will include sufficient time at the end for members' questions.

KOHAI EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

Mr. Tolley: Fine, thank you. I wish to thank the committee, first of all, for hearing our presentation. The people on my immediate left are Simone Lebrun and Gordon Queen, both staff teachers at the Kohai Educational Centre. In the back, in the audience, are some of the children and some of the parents of the school. I have prepared a brief and there are some loose pages at the back of the brief giving a list of names of some of the parents who are supportive of the brief. It was not included in the brief. It is some loose pages.

Basically, what I would like to do first is perhaps explain what the Kohai Educational Centre is. The purpose and function is summarized very basically in the brief as an appendix on page 11–that is the last page of the brief–and I would like to briefly explain who the students are and why we are here.

Typically, students in Kohai are really, for want of a better word, failures of the public school system. Not all of them, but many of them are students who have been through the public school system. They have gone into the regular grade system. They have gone into special education, and basically their learning has stopped. So the parents have been forced to look elsewhere to other means and, like myself, some of the parents have chosen this particular school, Kohai. So many of the students have been through the public system and the parents have said, "Well, it doesn't work for these children." I recognize it may well work for many children but for these children the system did not work, so the parents went elsewhere.

Typically, these children have a very unsuccessful experience within the public system and they have a repertoire of, if you want, avoidance behaviours. The teachers at Kohai are, I think, a very innovative group. They are very well qualified, both academically and from experience, and have worked very well with these children, with these educationally disabled, disadvantaged children.

I think what I would like to get across is that we are a private school–and I recognize we are, maybe, a private school–but really, monetary considerations aside, we are not looking from that viewpoint, we are not here from that viewpoint. The teachers–they may not like me to say this–have a true sense of vocation. If, for example, they were to go back into the public system, their salaries would increase tremendously. I think the salaries they expect are way below the scale in the public schools.

As parents, we are not sending our children to Kohai for élitist reasons, and we are really not seeking to remove our children from the mainstream. The big problem is there is a gap in the public school system. We are a group of parents whose children have basically exhausted the possibilities in the present public school system and have found, for whatever reasons, their children have stopped learning. There is a gap in the system, possibly brought about, to some degree, by Bill 82.

Again, Kohai as a school is not in competition in any way with the public school system. It is taking children who have not successfully been accommodated in the public system. Again, these are children, regrettably, who have failed the special educational programs. They have stopped learning. The system does not work for these children. Kohai has succeeded, perhaps in some degree, where the public system fails for this very small minority of disadvantaged children.

Many of these children in Kohai have in fact been reintegrated into the public school system.

They try not to reference them by labels, but typically there are autistic children, Down syndrome children. I am giving labels that I do not like giving, but there are mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, school-phobic, voluntary mutes and so on. They are really children who are very difficult to place successfully. Well, you can place them in a public school, but to what benefit to them? As a parent, specifically in my case, I looked to other avenues and found a school such as Kohai.

I will just say Kohai is a private institution, and it is entirely dependent on fees for services from the parents of the students. I understand there are no outside fees other than what parents can pay, basically, to cover the cost of the salaries and the upkeep of the school.

Turning to the report, on page 1, there is a very brief synopsis outlining, if you want, the beef that I have and that I think many of the parents and some of the teachers have, basically saying there is a gap in the educational system for these children, who are at the bottom of the heap. We are not talking about private school, where an élite group is aiming for the top. This is a small group of very disadvantaged children who have not found a place in the public system and have basically failed. As parents, we are looking for some other avenues.

Turning to page 2, the first two or three pages of this report are basically setting a scene and saying: "Well, the educational system can't realistically or practically, in its present form, be everything to all people. Certain people fall through. Certain people do not fit." I think the answer to the question is, what is an equitable system? Is there a finite answer to this, that one necessarily should strive for this goal?

1020

On page 2 and page 3, I have suggested an analogy to this using the transportation system in Toronto, suggested by many people to be, and I would tend to agree, one of the better systems in the world. Yet it does not suit all people; certain people cannot use it. Ask someone in a wheelchair if he can use the subway system. There is a gap. It does not suit everyone. Some people cannot use these services.

At the bottom of page 2 is something relatively important. We are not addressing any type of social stigma that may be attached to using these services. We are simply addressing that it is within the financial capability of a certain group of people to make use of these services; accessibility to an education system that is for these children deficient in the public system.

I am reading through page 3. For the time limitation, I am trying to précis the report. I am saying that in our view it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the education system to be all things to all people. I think it impractical that everyone's needs can be fulfilled. It would be nice if they could be, but it is unfortunate that this small minority, this disadvantaged minority, which perhaps most needs attention, most needs access, simply due to an inability to pay does not have this access.

On page 4, I have very briefly outlined the terms of reference of this committee and underlined with emphasis what I consider to be the relevant points for my presentation. It is our desire to present the plight of a small number of children with moderate or severe learning disabilities and how best to enhance their chances of a successful transition into adulthood. Again, I am coming back and saying there is a gap in the system.

Clearly, from my point of view, although some people may disagree, from a very practical perspective of having a child who is disadvantaged and meeting with other parents, the public system does not cater to a certain group of children, while private systems such as the Kohai Educational Centre do.

On page 5, I refer to a previous report by Bernard Shapiro, the Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario, and making reference to Bill 82. I think some of the problems stem from Bill 82, maybe not intentionally; however, this is what has happened. There was a funding system in place, I think prior to 1985 or 1986, whereby parents of children who could not afford the fees of such a school as Kohai could have some benefit, could have some fees paid, so they could have the access. Now this has completely disappeared, and there is no access to the schools such as Kohai unless you are in an upper-income bracket; the fees are most expensive. It is a problem. There are certain children out there in Toronto who do not have this advantage which they should have.

Again, I would agree generally with the Shapiro report and I agree generally with the efforts of Bill 82. I agree with the Shapiro commission, but I think there is a real need for a private institution to deal with some of the special problems presented by these students.

In the middle of page 6, I say we offer no definition of these terms because the needs of children suffering disabilities or disadvantages are often highly different and highly individualized and they do not fit into the public system.

Are these children left to struggle along or, worse, retire from the pressures of attempting to deal with inappropriate educational programs?

Turning to page 7, basically the second paragraph says that where we find the current system and Bill 82 objectionable, and I do find it objectionable, is in the ability of all segments of society to take advantage of these special education alternatives. Simply put, it is beyond the abilities of some people to have access to these services because of their limited ability to pay these private fees.

Here lies the crux of our grievance; we would hope this select committee will make some allowance for these families with students with special educational needs. Financial support is essential in order for some students to attend schools with appropriate programs so the stated objectives of intellectual and moral autonomy for the young and successful transition of young students into adulthood can be reached in Ontario.

Basically, it would be nice if access was for all.

Again, I am not suggesting in any way that we want funding for private schools. It would be nice if I could recover the cost of a fee for my child, since it is costing me $5,000 or $6,000 a year, but I am not looking for this. I have the ability to pay. I think that, as a group of people, we have a social conscience, if you like, and we are concerned that certain of the children who were in this school have left and they have lost the access, because the public system does not cater to it. There is no alternative unless one can pay.

I am turning to page 8, and reading through this, I am basically giving some suggestions, only suggestions, as to methods by which this could be remedied, some form of provision of fees whereby parents who cannot afford this system, this school or schools such as the Kohai Educational Centre, could be able to have access to these programs.

Our basic beef is that it was never Kohai's intention to be an élitist school and this is in fact where we are. We are now élitist, we are serving only those who can afford to pay.

As I suggested before, a system was in place. At one time a quarter to a third of the children in this school had assistance with school fees, I believe through the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Some students are no longer at Kohai simply because of their parent's inability to pay. Now there is no funding in place either to the school or parents.

I believe a segment of the educational disabled is simply being denied a working education and being left on the shelf. I am suggesting there is surely some remedy to fill this gap in the system to these disadvantaged learners to avail themselves of the basic necessity of an appropriate education. They are discriminated against. It irks me and I feel it is wrong.

1030

Our group got together. Basically, in crude terms, strictly from a profit motive we would not be here today. This school would not be making this presentation. If monetary considerations were the only criterion, I would think maybe the staff would be perfectly satisfied with the status quo. We feel there is this group of children; we have seen these children in this school who have left, who now basically are on the shelf. They do not fit into the public school system. They are out there and do not have access to what I believe they should have access to.

We are not talking about an élitist private school, a school of privilege for the young one step from the top or people at the top of the heap. We are not attempting to create those at the top of the heap. We are concerned with children at the bottom of the scale, some considered completely uneducable who need to be taken one step from the bottom and further if possible.

We are really talking of children who really deserve assistance and those whom the public school system has failed. These are children who have not benefited from the system that is in place. These are children who are being stopped. If they do not have access to not necessarily this school but other similar schools of which there are several, they will simply remain on the bottom level. They are simply going to be stopped at that level. Their future is cut off. They do not have access. This lack of access is simply because of the parents' inability to pay. Yet most of these parents pay, I expect, educational taxes through municipal tax assessments.

As I have been with this school for a number of years, I object to the school being limited to serve really the children of the rich. The school is not designed for this. This is not our bag. Kohai should provide an education for the educationally disadvantaged on a very broad basis and should be accessible, as indeed the school was to some degree historically.

Again, I am saying the term "private school" sometimes has a public image as perceived in the public mind of what a public school is. Kohai is a school of special needs for the educationally disadvantaged. We feel it should be able to

accommodate students from parents who can pay and those who cannot pay. There should not be this distinction.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Tolley, I just mention there are only about seven minutes left for questions, so you might want to wind up.

Mr. Tolley: What I would like to do very briefly then is just read a testimonial from one parent. It is very brief. It perhaps will sum the issue up very succinctly. This testimony was not written for the purposes of this committee. I went to the school last week and it was on the file. It was completed in September 1988.

It simply says: "Our son came to Kohai when he was four years old. He had been assessed by two preschool treatment centres as autistic and retarded and was considered too low functioning for their programs. He was considered too low functioning to fit into the public systems.

"He did not speak or respond to his name and spent a great deal of his time running back and forth, flapping his hands and yelling. Now, six years old, he talks constantly, plays creatively with his friends and is reading math and stories, writes and, in fact, is superior in some of his academic requirements to children of his own age. His grandfather calls it a miracle. We know his success is to the credit and the expertise of the staff working at Kohai."

My basic beef is that other children such as this, who have passed through the public system, do not have access to educational programs that exist at Kohai. One can see here the benefit to this child.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Keyes has suggested that perhaps you could just very briefly read your seven recommendations into the record. It might be very good use of your time to get that into Hansard officially. Then we would shorten the members' questions.

Mr. Tolley: I will just read them verbatim. Fine.

1. Partial funding, e.g., 75 per cent, for pupils attending approved private schools, payable to the parents or to the schools. This system is already in place in Alberta.

2. Partial funding up to certain limits, e.g., an amount reflecting the amount paid per student in the regular school system.

3. Associated schools model where certain approved private institutions would be funded in much the same way as public institutions.

4. A voucher system whereby parents or schools would receive a voucher for the equivalent of their child's cost of education in a public school.

5. School fees could be tax deductible for parents of children in approved private schools.

6. Taxable grants for parents with children in approved private schools.

7. Provision of some subsidies for approved private schools, materials, transport and perhaps teachers' salaries.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. It is quite interesting; we have had a number of presentations that have recommended a much more integrated system and been very supportive of Bill 82 and the need to have children integrated into the regular classroom. I think you have just made quite a case for a need for certain segregated schools and classrooms also.

We have only three or four minutes, so Mr. Beer and Mr. Johnston, perhaps you can keep preamble, statements and questions to a minimum.

Mr. Beer: I will try to be brief. Thank you very much for your submission.

In looking at the Shapiro report, what he was suggesting was that for those private schools that would come within the ambit of the local boards, there would be a set of provisions that would kick in in terms of funding and so on. I appreciate the point that you are making. When we talk about private schools, there are different groups of private schools. In your case, you are looking at children who have not been accommodated by the public system.

I would even wonder out loud, with the best of intentions, whether there are always some children for whom a much smaller and more independent setting is going to be required as opposed to the kind of large schools that we have. Would that Shapiro system, in your view, work for you? Have you had any discussions with any of the Metro Toronto boards about some sort of relationship? There are two questions there.

Mr. Tolley: For myself, I have not, but I cannot speak for the school. Perhaps Mr. Queen can answer that. I read the voluminous Shapiro report and gleaned what information I could, but I would read into it that he suggested very strongly within Ontario what I am saying: it cannot be all things to all people, and there is a need for a very healthy private school system.

1040

Now, yes, he is suggesting, and I would agree with you, that it should come, if possible, under an ambit of the public school system, but I think my position is that I do not mind where this program lies. It would be good if it were in the public school system, I could make use of it; but I

am saying, from a very practical point of view, as a parent now and as a parent for the next four or five years with a child at that age, it does not exist. There are children, from my practical experience out there in the field, who do not fit, and if their parents cannot afford to pay these fees, these children suffer, which I think is wrong and very unfair.

Mr. Beer: I appreciate that and it was just whether that was for you and perhaps other schools of a similar nature a route that should be seriously considered as we are looking at recommendations for the future with respect to Shapiro.

Mr. Tolley: What I am trying to get across is perhaps not to suggest a remedy to a situation which may be very mechanical in its approach. I am simply stressing that there is a problem that should be addressed and I wish to bring to this committee's attention that I believe there is a big and a serious problem for this very small minority.

As to how it can be addressed, I would agree with you, certainly that is one avenue to follow. There may be other avenues to follow as well.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Queen, did you have a comment?

Mr. Queen: Just to reiterate that perhaps this committee should see Mr. Tolley's seven recommendations as seven possible alternatives to a remedy of the situation. Certainly Dr. Shapiro treated the situation of special education independent schools somewhat independently from other types in recommending, for example, a purchase-of-service arrangement, and that would be another alternative.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I really think it is important to get some distinctions here, though, between the kinds of things you are talking about and the way social policy is developed in these areas.

Having myself been involved in the old vocational rehabilitation days, I do not think it is a panacea that I would ever want to go back to. It was never based on the ability of parents to pay. That is very important to understand. It was based on the need of the kid, so many wealthy people were in fact able to beat the system by hiring good lawyers and going to the Social Assistance Review Board, whereas poor people, if they were lucky to get an MPP who knew how to use the system, maybe got things through and often would never qualify.

What Bill 82 was supposed to do was to guarantee an exceptional child an education appropriate to his needs, and if the public system could not do it, then the government was supposed to fund the appropriate education someplace for that child. There are many failures in Bill 82. One of the principal ones is that the whole method for appealing the appropriateness of a placement is just a sham and does not work.

There is going to be a review of Bill 82 this year, and that is going to be a very appropriate time for schools like yours to basically get in there and talk about how to improve that system to make sure appropriate placements are dealt with.

However, there are a couple of points I wanted to find out, if I might, because when you have been around the province for these last number of years, we have seen places where Down syndrome kids are very easily dealt with within the school system, where there are very interesting experiments being done, within mostly the Catholic system, I would say, but also in the public systems, around behaviour modification kinds of programs, which often have been pioneered in schools like your own.

We have seen cases, in the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, for instance, where multiply handicapped kids–deaf, blind, with many developmental handicaps–are being incorporated very successfully within the school system.

The question then arises, how is it that in a place like Metro Toronto–which has a public system with a range of alternative schools, admittedly not so much for the kind of clientele we are talking about here, and which has accepted that notion of its responsibility to provide alternative approaches; for instance, its A-style schools–these kids have not been accommodatable within that, or why payment for their program at Kohai is not being paid by the boards and by the province if their needs cannot be met within the public school system?

I guess I would really want to know from you–and you do not have to give it to me statistically today but if you could get it to the committee, it would be very helpful to know–how many of these children were in the school system before and how many did not actually enter the school system. How many had been through an identification and placement review committee and what were the problems with that? Does it come down to this whole problem of definition of the program being appropriate versus placement? Was that the problem? Is that why that came to loggerheads and the kids were withdrawn from the system?

I would be interested to know how many came from the public board, as we know it in Metro, and how many came from the Metropolitan Separate School Board, because they have had very different policies in terms of dealing with the range of labels that you have been talking about. I would just like to know how many of them have tried to take an appeal any further and run into problems there because, in theory, again, if the child cannot be served within the system and you can show that all the problems are there in the system, then there should be money available to follow that child presently.

I would be very interested in getting much more of a statistical understanding of the makeup of the kids in the school to know exactly how it is they ended at Kohai, because that is what we are going to have to deal with when we deal with Bill 82.

Mr. Tolley: The public system works very well for certain groups of children, maybe for Down syndrome children, for certain children. This is a very individual selection.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: For instance, they do have the Trillium School and the notion that that should be funded and accepted. Payment by the province is there. There is the notion, therefore, that programs you have should be considered appropriate for some kids; therefore, funding should be available, supposedly, within the ambit of Bill 82.

I am trying to figure out on an individual basis why that has not worked, because when that legislation comes up this fall–more than what the select committee is dealing with–when we concentrate on that, that is how we can fix the immediate problem in financial terms, one would hope, for the parents involved.

Mr. Queen: Would you like us to address that information to you personally?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh no, to the committee.

Madam Chairman: Yes, we would very much appreciate it if you could get that information to us. As Mr. Johnston mentioned, they are having a review of Bill 82, I believe, later this fall, is it not?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We expect the legislation to be introduced this fall.

Madam Chairman: In which case, it may be an opportune time to make your particular plight known and the way in which Bill 82 is failing you. If you could address that information to the committee, I suppose we could offer to provide that to the ministry.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Then it becomes a public document with publicly available information.

The point you exemplify here is a failure of the system of Bill 82 from the perspective of the parents having made the choice to go to Kohai without any financial assistance. Supposedly, in the great theory of Bill 82, that was never supposed to happen again. The problems we had were never supposed to occur again.

In point of fact, they are happening a lot. We are getting a very specific notion of where the breakdown has happened and why an appropriate program is not being made available within the public system or being paid for in the private system by the public if the public system cannot provide it. That is the real nub of our problem with Bill 82.

More than a select committee looking at general issues of education, as we are, you will have a very specific opportunity this fall or whenever we have specific hearings on that new legislation, to get in and change the actual law which affects, in some ways, the economic viability of your school and certainly the appropriate programs for the kids.

Mr. Queen: I would just like to add that the group of parents of students we have at Kohai have done more than just say that somewhere the system is not fair. We became a charitable organization last year. Our parents have done tremendous amounts of work to raise money, one of the purposes being to provide financial assistance for parents who cannot afford full fees. So they are an action group of people.

Madam Chairman: Certainly those parents are very much to be commended. It is nice to see that kind of very proactive action on the part of parents to make your type of school more available to parents who cannot afford it. Thank you very much for bringing your concerns to our committee today. We look forward to receiving that information.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: I can't believe there are any behaviour problems here.

Madam Chairman: That is right. We certainly must say that your children are very well behaved. I do not know if the parents or the school deserves the congratulations for that, but we will give it to both.

Mr. Queen: The children deserve it.

Mr. Keyes: The children; that's right.

Our next presentation, Recommendations for Technical Education, will be by Peter Cassidy

and Chris Gainey. Could you come forward, please.

Good morning and welcome to our committee. As you can see, as usual, we are running late, but we nevertheless very much welcome you. You might like to go directly into your brief. Please just identify yourself for the purposes of Hansard. We hope that you will allow sufficient time at the end of your presentation for members' questions.

PETER CASSIDY
CHRIS GAINEY

Mr. Cassidy: I think it was Ziegfeld who said you should not follow a child or animal act, so we could be in trouble here. My name is Peter Cassidy. I am the head of technological studies at Bishop Ryan in Hamilton. This is my fifth year of teaching. Prior to that I spent three years in the construction industry as a draftsman and a quantity surveyor. I teach drafting in high schools now. Preceding that, I have a three-year diploma from a community college in London.

Mr. Gainey: I am Chris Gainey. I teach woodworking at College Heights Secondary School in Guelph. I have a background in cabinet making. I have my cabinet-making papers. I teach woodwork in grades 9 and 10 in a vocational school.

Mr. Cassidy: As teachers of technological studies, we feel that courses in technological studies offer students a unique and complete learning experience in which physical activity is combined with intellectual activity, and that the diploma requirements of OSIS should be amended to ensure that all students share in this experience.

There are two major misconceptions about technological studies that must be addressed. The first is that the sole aim of courses in technological studies is to prepare students for work in a particular trade. The second is that education is strictly intellectual in nature.

With regard to the first misconception, the question that has often been posed to myself and the school by students and parents is: "Why would I take drafting? I do not want to work as a draftsman." Similar arguments are applied to other courses in technologies.

The question, it appears, is exclusively and inappropriately applied to courses in technological studies. The same skills that will be practised in the simulated employment work setting, as described in the ministry guideline for technological studies, are not only valuable for those students who wish to enter into a trade following secondary school, but are also beneficial to all students. Students of technological studies develop a familiarity with materials and processes related to technology that will enable them to be more independent and knowledgeable as adults.

Practical examples of the advantages of technical literacy are obvious, from the individual who can converse with a mechanic about the diagnosis on his or her car to the person who reads and understands the plans for his new home.

There are certain specific attitudes associated with technological studies that I think are also beneficial for students as they move into their adult lives. Students of technological studies must learn to work safely, with a concern for those with whom they are working in a shop setting. They must also, in some cases, work as part of a production team. These are both valuable skills which will help them in their adult lives.

By working with various materials, students will develop an appreciation for the vast resources of this country, conservation, concern for the ecology and appreciation for the work of others. Those same entry-level job skills that are necessary for students interested in employment in the technology industries may also be invaluable to all students in solving problems in their daily lives.

Mr. Gainey: The second misconception, which is probably a more widespread one–I do not think it is even conscious–is that learning has to take place between the ears. Learning takes place from the feet up and the whole body is part of the learning process. I will quote from the brief at about the second or third page. This is Alfred North Whitehead speaking:

"I lay it down as an educational axiom that you will come to grief as soon as you forget that your pupils have bodies....There is a co-ordination of senses and thought and also a reciprocal influence between brain activity and material creative activity. In this reaction the hands are peculiarly important. It is a moot point whether the human hand created the brain or the brain created the hand."

Today, with Bill 82, we are trying to meet everybody's needs. Education has become far less geared to the university-bound person. It is general. We are trying to reach everybody and there is no place we can do it better than with technological studies. Everyone has certain strengths, and we incorporate the hands and the mind. Both sides of the brain, the affective and the cognitive, are employed, and you have a much better opportunity to reach everyone

because it is a different type of learning as well. Instead of just using abstractions employed in the mind, the whole body is being used. This is where we can reach those people who are turned off by school, as well as those who are maybe turned off by the intellectuality of school. School should be trying to teach people to live, not just to learn from books.

I will touch on the philosophical background we used.

First, language across the curriculum is a big catchphrase today. Everybody wants to be a good communicator. We want all our students to be well versed in reading, writing and arithmetic. We have them all in tech studies. Our students have got to learn to use language, and not only from a literature point of view. They have to know terminology. They learn vocabulary regularly. They learn ways to use that vocabulary to describe, to try to interpret and to compare. We are constantly using language in technological studies.

Second, one point we touched on in our brief was the feeling of personal power. People today are very, very specialized in their jobs. We have a feeling of helplessness when it comes to anything technological. In technological studies, we can address that and give people a feeling of power that they can create with their hands long after they are finished school.

Mr. Cassidy: As teachers of technological studies and as technically minded persons, it is not difficult for us to see the value in technical education. This makes it easy for us to convince students that they should be choosing technological courses as part of their program. This promotional campaign is necessary for many courses that must compete as elective credits in student timetables, but it is made more difficult for teachers of technological studies.

There unfortunately exists an ignorance on the part of people both within and outside the school community as to what goes on in a technological studies classroom. This perceived ignorance reflects no indifference on the part of others, but simply indicates the need for teachers of technological studies to educate parents, colleagues and students to the merits of technological studies and to change existing stereotypical attitudes towards courses in technological studies.

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We would be presumptuous to suggest that technological studies programs are the most important vehicle for educating students or that courses in technological studies are the only activity within the school in which kinetic activity is linked with intellectual activity. However, technological studies courses provide a stimulating and unique learning experience that should be compulsory for all students, in our opinion. If we are to fulfil the goals of education in helping individual learners to achieve their potential in their adolescent development, we must acknowledge technological studies as an important element in achieving these goals.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We very much appreciate the fact that you have left plenty of time for questions.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you, gentlemen, for making the presentation. I have always had a soft spot in my heart for technical studies. I always felt that as a student, through school for many years, I was frustrated and never had an opportunity, starting out in country, rural schools that Al McLean would know about, and continuation schools, as they were called, through grades 9 and 10. I never got into that field, so when I ended up being principal in a senior elementary school, I spent most of my evenings and weekends working in the shop, sometimes to the frustration of the tech teacher, but I enjoyed it. It was great.

I have really watched the high schools. The technical teachers tend to blame it all on OSIS. I think that has some validity, but not in the main. I want you to think and own up to me for a moment whether a lot of the problem in the lack of students taking tech education rests with the tech teachers themselves. After you have gone through school, you always remember teachers who excited you in various things. You can think of English teachers who can really excite you about the English language. You can think of history teachers who make history interesting.

It has been my contention—it has perhaps something to do with the training—that tech teachers have failed to excite the interest and imagination of the students. Part of that may be from the fact that a good number of them, frankly, came from industry to begin with, and came into the classes in the 1960s when the federal government poured all the money into it, and so they came with a skill orientation.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Not this kind of analysis we have seen in the paper.

Mr. Keyes: No. They did not have a philosophical base to working with and teaching students, and therefore now the window of opportunity we have opened, frankly—I must be very bold here—is to allow many of these teachers, who provided when there was a great demand, to leave the system early without

penalty and receive a proper pension. I could go back and name, but will not, dozens of that type of people. I wonder if that is not part of the problem.

How do we rekindle it? We do not do it by making it compulsory, as you have suggested here, in my opinion. There are areas where I can support compulsory subjects in order to gain your diploma, but I am really concerned about saying it must be compulsory. I like to think of it as being optional, getting full credit, but that somehow you design the types of courses–there have been reviews done on technical studies–that would really make students see the merits of that involvement. I had better let you defend yourselves now that I have tried to tear you down.

Mr. Gainey: On the first point, I think you have a very valid point. There are a lot of teachers, perhaps even more so today than when you went to school or when you were a principal, who are not good tech teachers. We are not defending them. Tech opened up in the 1960s. A lot of new teachers came in. Today, those people are tired and they are getting ready to retire. Tech is suffering because of that and I will not pretend to let on that I am not aware of that; I am painfully aware of that. Tech teachers are, in part, responsible for the fact that technical education has suffered dramatically during the 1980s. I think it is widely known that tech teachers blame OSIS for all their woes because it takes the responsibility off their shoulders; no problem there.

But I think you should look at it in another way. The fact that technical teachers do not have the same background as academic teachers is just a fact of life. They tend not to have been extremely literate people. They are good communicators in other ways. Other than orally, perhaps, or even written, they are good communicators. You mentioned the English teacher who may have inspired you or inspired a class. I think for every one of those, you will find a tech teacher who is equally inspiring, who has the same dynamism and energy and care for his students that any other teacher in any other subject has. There are some extremely good technical teachers.

Mr. Keyes: I do not deny that, because I have seen a couple of those as well.

Mr. Gainey: Okay. Again, part of the lack of training may be the cause for this lack of philosophy on the part of technical teachers. It is lacking, but when you say that you will not support a compulsory subject, it is damned hard to get those kids in there, because the system, like any system, is set up now so you play the game in order to get what you want out of the system.

The way the timetables tend to be made in high schools is that compulsory subjects are slated off in grades 9 and 10. You get them out of the way and then you take what you want. When you are in grade 11, you do not want to go back and take a grade 9 introductory auto mechanics course, even though you might enjoy it very much. There is no way you are going to go back and sit with grade 9s. That is working against us. That is the reason we want one compulsory tech-only credit, so we can get them in the door, and then we can inspire them. We cannot get them in the door right now on the ground floor, and that is what we want.

Mr. Keyes: I guess my quick follow-up to that would be, could we not achieve more of that if we went away from this business of streaming, etc., and the number of compulsory credits in OSIS, to a combination so that grades 9 and 10 would have more of a common type of approach to education? They would then have a feeling of more freedom. There would not be that demand of the front-end loading you are referring to. Then they might be more inclined to get into these areas.

Mr. Gainey: Sure. If compulsory subjects were set up such that in grade 9 this was compulsory, in grade 10 this was compulsory, in grade 11 this was compulsory, then we would have a chance, but right now we do not have a chance. The numbers are just working against us.

Mr. Keyes: The only other thing is that there is perhaps nothing much more dangerous to a student and a classroom than to have someone forced into a technical studies program in a machine shop or somewhere in grade 9 or 10, who is there against his or her will.

Mr. Gainey: Sure. I am sure that is no different from the student who is forced into a grade 9 French program.

Mr. Keyes: That is hell for the teacher, but it is not quite as potentially physically damaging as it is in a shop.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I always thought that the principals really liked the tech programs because they could get their cars repaired cheaply. That was always my impression.

Mr. Gainey: That is true.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Was that not it?

Mr. Keyes: No, no.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was really taken by the philosophical tenor of your paper and the

analysis in it. Having tech teachers talking about power relationships is just glorious as far as I am concerned, for all sorts of reasons, which I am always talking about to business councils that come before us. I think that is really an important aspect to add to tech ed.

Just to follow up on Mr. Keyes's line, you are basically saying that if you get them in the door, then you can keep them. The problem is you cannot get them in the door for the front-end loading.

What would the nature of the compulsory tech ed course be, if you had one? I mean, we do have such a range of options. I remember ending up in the early 1960s where the option for me was to go into the tech course–I think it was a specific machine shop at that time, as I recall–or to take typing or to take home economics. I had typing skills. I had to learn my cooking skills later, and my car is still in trouble.

Mr. Keyes: You should have taken car repair first, to repair your car.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. What would the nature be of that compulsory tech study?

Mr. Cassidy: I think the method of delivery has changed over the years with–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was my next question.

Mr. Cassidy: –the industrial arts programs. There are new courses in the wind now in different technologies–for instance, communications, manufacturing, construction and transportation–that would give the students an overview and not specific trade-type training, as has been traditionally used in the schools. They would come away from that not so much with a particular skills training, but with a sort of overview of that segment of industry, which they may slot into or they may not.

1110

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But it would be hands-on, I gather, if it was the same principle you were talking about before.

Mr. Cassidy: Yes. It is the same process, but it is sort of an interdisciplinary approach, in which they would explore all aspects of the manufacturing industry, for example. They would not learn how to run a machine. They would get an introduction to it, and it would not be as extensive as what they would get under a traditional, say, machine shop course.

Mr. Gainey: Many schools today offer what is called an exploratory tech credit where you get a component of drafting, a component of auto, a component of woodworking and a component of family studies in one credit. They are all partial credits. I think that is fair, and it is particularly fair to the students, so they get a different taste.

If that could be compulsory, fine. If it was described as containing so many different components, one from each different heading under the tech heading, fine. But what is happening now is that high schools that do have a mandatory technical credit, in many cases, are slotting you into typing, hairdressing or whatever they have free, which is not doing tech any service at all. If it could be prescribed just what that compulsory tech credit were to be, being partially made up of different credits, great, so much the better.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But what you just described is actually happening.

Mr. Gainey: It is and it is not; it depends on the school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other angle that has come up a lot with people lately is just what the nature of tech instruction should be and where it should take place. In fact, there are a number of people coming before us who say it is best not done in the school. Forgetting the overview notion that you have come forward with here as your base, they say the specific study on technology may be best done through co-op ed and out in the community, that this is maybe more appropriate to what people are actually going to find when they get out into the workforce. May I have your response to that?

Mr. Cassidy: Ideally, I think co-op programs in technology are great for kids. I would debate the point often made–I do not know if this is what you are referring to–that the situation in high school is not consistent with the situation in the workplace, say, be it through the type of machinery used or the applications of certain materials. I do not think most industries, small businesses anyway, are able to keep up with the changes in technology that we often hear about or read about. In many cases, the situations that are simulated in a shop give the kid enough entry-level training that he could pursue an apprenticeship.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The example that is always used is auto technology or whatever it is being called now, that the diagnostic tools within the classroom are not the equivalent of what is out there in the shops. Can you respond to that.

Mr. Cassidy: I think it depends on the school, for one thing, how much funding is available for the upgrading of those very large capital expenditures. Second, it depends on where the student might be going to work if we were referring to a

co-op placement or, upon leaving school, to go for an apprenticeship. I would think that a lot of small garages, for example, would themselves have a hard time keeping up with that kind of expense and keeping themselves upgraded in that regard. I would not say it exactly duplicates a work situation, but I think it gives them some good entry-level training.

Mr. Gainey: Can I respond to your point, as well? First, co-op is great for tech and for high school in general. It is going to work, but co-op tends to come later on in high school grades. It is usually in senior grades. We have not had them in the junior grades by the time they come to the senior grades where they are going to want to pursue co-op in tech.

Second, you are falling into the old-fashioned idea, in my mind, that tech is strictly for trade training. It is not. It is for learning and learning how to learn. We do it as well as anybody, if not better.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I want to make it clear that I was not positing the position. It has been said to us a number of times in the last little while.

Mr. Gainey: Sure.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Also, I would just say that I agree with Mr. Keyes's analysis of some of the problems of the technical teachers in the past, but I also have to give credit to some. The reason people who were streamed into basic were salvaged, if I can put it that way, and then made it out–it certainly was not their academic teachers who saved them and inspired them–was the tech teachers who recognized they had a lot more going for them than had been recognized in the elementary school experience and got them streamed higher–making up a year, mind you–and finally out of it.

Mr. Cassidy: It is to the credit of a lot of technological studies courses and teachers that–it is not so much that these kids are having trouble in their academic courses. It is not that the technology courses are easier or anything. I think there is a different kind of stimulation there that may not be there in their regular classes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Or relevance.

Mr. Cassidy: Those who have trouble with reading and that sort of thing maybe get just enough stimulation out of a tech program because they are working with their hands and solving problems in a more concrete way that they do better.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much for a breath of fresh air on technical education. I think it is a very positive approach. I hope you will continue your leadership role, because I presume you have assumed that rather voluntarily in some kind of an association that technical teachers have. Is that true or are you speaking as individuals?

Mr. Cassidy: We are making ours as individuals, but there are associations.

Mrs. O'Neill: One of you teaches at the advanced level and one at the basic level–is that correct?–or one at the general level and–

Mr. Cassidy: I teach in a regular high school in which all levels are enrolled. Mr. Gainey teaches in a vocational school.

Mrs. O'Neill: So you are teaching at the basic level. Do you feel that is the way it should be, that there should be basic-level, general-level, and in other words, no advanced-level technical? I am wondering if more students would enrol, because advanced is where it seems we are hearing most people want to start in high school. That is why I am asking the question.

Mr. Gainey: I think it is a matter of window-dressing, personally. I am in a basic-level school. We have some general-level academic courses, but we do not offer any of our tech credits at basic level. I have students, as you were saying, who have the smarts. These kids are at advanced level, only they learn and react differently. They are working at an advanced level in my discipline. I do not really care whether you want to divide it three ways, two ways or one way. It does not really make a lot of difference to me.

Mrs. O'Neill: It may not make a lot of difference to you. I guess my concern is that it may make a lot of difference to the choice that is made when the student enters high school, particularly from the parental point of view, it seems.

Mr. Cassidy: I am currently embroiled in the same debate. We are discussing, in our technical department, whether to offer certain courses at the advanced level. Traditionally, we have offered them at the general level. It has been discussed whether, as you say, for a lot of parents who have different aspirations for their children the general-level designation would discourage them from taking a technical course, because of that designation. I do not know the answer. We are going to experiment with it and see what happens.

For instance, while my draughting program has a general-level designation, a poll of the students who enrol in my draughting class shows

most of them are at the advanced level. They are taking advanced-level courses, except for my draughting course. Fortunately, that does not discourage them too much.

Mrs. O'Neill: If you find anything on that particular subject or if you make decisions, it would certainly be helpful if you would send that kind of thing to the committee.

Mr. Cassidy: Okay.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If they were around when I was in high school, I might have taken it.

Mr. Cassidy: We offer a couple of night classes.

Madam Chairman: As long as they did not involve math, right?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is math involved in most of the stuff.

Madam Chairman: Maybe you would not have taken that tech.

Interjections.

Madam Chairman: We are giving Richard a case of math anxiety just by mentioning the word.

Thank you very much, Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Gainey, for your contribution to our committee today.

Our next presentation is by the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. Perhaps you could come forward, please. Welcome back to our committee, Mrs. Nichols. We are seeing you in a slightly different role this time. I think the last time it was with the Alliance for Children–Ontario.

1120

Mrs. Nichols: That is right.

Madam Chairman: We are pleased to have you back. I have noted that you have a very comprehensive brief with a large number of recommendations, so I have suggested that you might wish to dispense with the preamble, leave it up to members to read individually and maybe start at your summary section at the bottom of the third page, if that is acceptable.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mrs. Ziraldo: Before we go on, I would just like to say who I am. My name is Lynn Ziraldo. I am the parent of two learning-disabled children. I am also the chairperson of the legislation and education policy committee of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, as well as the chairperson of the provincial advisory group on the special education advisory committee, the parent one. That is the capacity in which I am here today, but most importantly, I am the parent of two learning-disabled children.

I would like to begin by stating what is needed to lead the way to success for children with learning disabilities: appropriate assessment, focusing on strengths as well as weaknesses; an individualized program based on assessment such that the program fits the child rather than the child fitting the program; service delivery in the most enabling environment, which may be a regular classroom or a withdrawal program or a congregated setting, depending on the child's needs; appropriately qualified and caring teachers; access to all necessary support services including psychology, speech and guidance.

In the final analysis, the emphasis must be on the whole child and the focus must include the child's emotional, social and physical development as well as the most obvious cognitive area.

I would like to start now with our first 10 recommendations:

1. That the educational system maintain its fundamental goal of enabling each child to develop to his or her full potential, whatever that potential may be.

2. That the system be determined on the recognition that the needs of the whole child, cognitive, social, emotional and physical, must be met within the educational setting.

3. That in order to serve exceptional students appropriately, full access to assessment services be made available, with the assessment focusing on the child's strengths as well as learning needs and with the programming being based upon a realistic, individualized plan based on the assessment.

4. That the organization of an educational system be such that it can deliver the necessary options: self-contained, resource withdrawal and regular classroom placements with appropriate modifications for each child.

5. That the placement be determined upon the outcome of the assessment and that the parents be an integral and equal part of the decision-making process in determining the placement.

6. That all programming for exceptional students be based on the recognition that they require the most enabling environment in order to succeed.

7. That the availability of options be guaranteed throughout the province such that the access does not depend on geographical location and that full compliance on the part of all school boards be guaranteed.

8. That the existing support services be delivered to students on the basis of identified need rather than apparently arbitrary policy directions.

9. That decisions relating to promotion–progress from one grade level to the next–be based on a system of continuous progress and continuous assessment, with full recognition of the fact that the child's self-esteem may be seriously damaged by having to fail several times.

10. That the promotion system at the secondary level be based upon the individualized educational plan, goals and objectives approved as part of the identification and placement review committee process, such that the appropriate modification of time, evaluation, programming and reasonable accommodation of special needs are all included.

I will now ask Eva Nichols, our executive director, to carry on with the remainder of the recommendations.

Mrs. Nichols: I shall read recommendations 11 to 27. I will not be commenting on them, but we will respond to questions if required.

11. That reasonable accommodation be determined as modifications to the pace, process and product of the learning process, without interfering with the integrity of the program outcome.

12. That there be full recognition of the advantages of maintaining the exceptional designation in the secondary panel.

13. That there be appropriate service delivery options for learning-disabled students at the secondary level.

14. That all teachers and support personnel, particularly guidance counsellors, be required to have some in-service training on teaching students with special needs. This is particularly important for the secondary level.

15. That all exceptional students be guaranteed access to regular and appropriate guidance services.

16. That the various levels of difficulty be maintained in the high schools, such that individual learning styles can be supported and that there be real flexibility in moving from one level to another based on individual need.

17. That the provincial demonstration schools for the learning-disabled be maintained.

18. That an additional demonstration school be established in the north in order to deliver equal access to families living north of the 46th parallel.

19. That the mandate of the provincial schools be expanded to recognize the need for programming for children with dual exceptionalities, such as learning-disabled and gifted, or learning-disabled and emotionally disturbed.

20. That the parent guides to special education, currently viewed primarily as an elementary panel document, be expanded to include all the relevant information on the secondary panel and be available for parents in all secondary schools.

21. That the parent guides to special education contain a section on the availability of provincial school services for the various exceptionalities.

22. That the organization of the semestered schools be sufficiently flexible to enable exceptional students to be successful.

23. That the enabling sections of OSIS be maintained and implemented.

24. That the status of the OAC year, sometimes but not always the fifth year of high school, be clarified in order to reduce the pressures arising from some students completing high school in four years and others in five. This issue requires particular flexibility on the part of universities.

25. That the parent guides enhance the availability of parent support services by listing the parent support organizations that exist locally and/or provincially, as well as the membership of the local special education advisory committee.

26. That whatever changes in the organization of the educational system are recommended as a result of these hearings, they include a reasonable period of evaluation before additional changes are approved.

27. Finally, that there be full recognition, in whatever organizational changes are implemented, that exceptional students have a full right of access to the services of the educational system.

Those are our recommendations. Rather than speaking any longer, we would be very happy to respond to any questions from the members of the committee.

Madam Chairman: We will start with Mr. Johnston. I think you had your hand up. He will be followed by Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just want to talk a little bit about streaming. It seems we are all using so many different definitions of this that often that is our biggest problem. I want to see if I understand what you are saying.

You seem to be positing that the choice is between the present kind of structure with more flexibility and a Radwanski kind of notion of one standard for all, even though you then talk about the elementary panel which has heterogeneous placements and has different standards for

individuals within it, or even groups within it in some schools.

You do not then seem to deal with that as a concept in the secondary level, but rather say that we keep the present streams and all the problems that are involved with labels, in my view, but increase the flexibility between them.

Some groups have been coming to us and saying that the kind of heterogeneous grouping that we have in public schools should at least be maintained through to the end of grade 10 with the recognition of individual needs within that and a different style program, rather than moving to the labelled streams that we have presently.

You do not seem to deal with that. I wonder if I can get your reactions.

Mrs. Nichols: It is certainly an issue that we have debated at some length. I do not think we have really come to a definitive answer. I think that the vagueness, to some extent, in our brief reflects that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It may be reflected in our report, too.

Mrs. Nichols: That is, of course, possible. From the point of view of families who have children with learning disabilities, the issue seems to be, first and foremost, that yes, they like the nonstreamed approach of the elementary system, but also they particularly like the fact that many of their children have access to a variety of placement options, sometimes self-contained. I quite grant you that you could call that streaming. We do not look at it as streaming because there are so many negative connotations to words like streaming and segregation.

We tend to talk about it as an enabling environment and a congregated setting. It is semantics, I know, but they really do reflect an attitude. In terms of what happens in the high school, I think the reason we have come down on the side of maintaining the three levels of difficulty that are there now is because we feel there is more opportunity to respond to individual learning styles. Frankly, we really saw the options as either maintaining what is recommended in OSIS or going with the Radwanski direction, because it seemed that those were the options that were in fact in front of people.

1130

Our fear in terms of the Radwanski recommendations was that he basically was making the assumption that exceptional students were going to be somewhere else, not within the school system, because there are several sections of that report where he very clearly says that youngsters with severe physical and mental handicaps of course are not expected to participate, achieve, etc.

In fact, one of the problems of the current situation is that many of the boards in this province do stream youngsters who used to be called learning-disabled in the elementary panel, who are no longer exceptional, at least on paper, when they go into the secondary panel at the basic level. That is a dilemma. We feel that by maintaining the LD designation, they can access the full range of programming.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That depends on which of the labels is stronger and more financially suited to the board's needs. That possibility is there right now, the point you are talking about.

Mrs. Nichols: Of course it is, but a great many boards consciously put pressure on families when the youngster reaches puberty and is grappling with all those sort of problems. You want to reduce the pressures on your child, have the child declared nonexceptional, send him into the basic level and then everything will proceed. Of course, it does not.

The other issue, which perhaps does reflect the fact that we really want to enhance the idea that many, if not all, LD children can proceed into post-secondary education, is that if there is the single system and exceptional students are somehow excluded from it, that would really shut the door in the face of many exceptional students in terms of proceeding into community college and university.

It is not that we are particularly hung up on the fact that everybody has to go to university, because we are not, but we can see that even with the community colleges, it is really an uphill fight for a family with an LD child to get things rolling if the child has not had mainly advanced-level courses in the high school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of the things that has happened here, it seems to me, is that we are trying to deal with things semantically and they are conceptually quite different. That is a very dangerous trap for any of us to get into. If you were here yesterday, you could quite clearly see this committee has not accepted the Radwanski game plan. I do not think your association should do so, either, and therefore find yourself making choices which conceptually are at odds with what the association has done in the past.

I think everybody on this committee is very strongly in favour of the individualized programming notion for a child. I have real concerns that streaming, at least streaming too early, is too strong a structure to fight for individualized

programming within it, that the homogeneity notion of basic-level students as a category is stronger than the notion of looking after the individual needs of the kid and that therefore the same rules especially apply to the LD kid.

What a number of us seem to be moving to, although there is no consensus–that is why I say we may be, in the end, as vague in this as you have been–is that if we can keep them together in grades 9 and 10 at least, and recognize the range of requirements for those kids at that time, the chance of people having more choices to go OAC or general-level routes in grades 11 and 12 is sure greater than it seems to be now with the streaming system.

I do not know where we are all going to end up on all of that. I think the Radwanski agenda has forced a number of people we have had coming before us into polarizing their attitudes and maybe even running against their own best interests, at least in terms of integration concepts.

Mrs. Nichols: I think part of the issue with the Radwanski report–and I know that is not what we are here to discuss–is that initially, when most of us responded to the Radwanski report, some of us had the opportunity to discuss it with the minister, and while he certainly never indicated that the Radwanski report was the model, he also indicated that there were going to be lots of other reports and, with the exception of the one from Alan King, which we are now told has been held up for a variety of reasons and he will not be ready to report until next year, we have not heard of others. Therefore, inevitably, when there is something that is floating around out there and everybody is reacting to it, the political reality is that suddenly people start accepting that that is the blueprint that you either go with or not. I think most of us have fallen into the trap of dealing with that.

In addition, one of the things that we do very much, as an organization, is that we look at service delivery to children with learning disabilities in other countries. For example, looking at what has been happening in Britain as a result of the Warnock report being implemented, it really has not benefited children with learning disabilities. I have friends who are of sort of inspectors in the schools, and what they are saying is basically that the LD students are dropping out left, right and centre because they do not fit in anywhere in the comprehensive system that they have set up. That is also a danger we do not want to fall into.

In a recent report that a task force in the US presented to Congress on the learning-disabled, and it is a major research report about an inch thick, one of the things it talks about is that some 50 per cent of learning-disabled students in fact do not finish high school in the US either.

We certainly would hate to create a situation or recommend the creation of a situation where the dropout rate becomes even higher in the LD population instead of going to the other extreme, because for this particular population, not completing a really thorough educational system where they can acquire good coping skills and so on is just a disaster for the rest of their lives.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I agree. In terms of the language we use, and again I do not think it is semantics, I think there is a real difference between the notion of establishing three- or four-year streams in a high school situation, which makes it very inflexible and has for 30 years–no matter how we have reframed them, they are very rigid terms, especially if you get streamed basic–

Mrs. Nichols: It is a disaster.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You are locked in. There is a big difference between that and the notion of temporary withdrawal of students, specific, short-term, goal-oriented segregations even, and then re-entry back into a heterogeneous class. Those are very different concepts, and maybe we have not got the right word for that, but everybody is using that kind of notion as streaming at this point, and because of that, I think we are running into some real problems in concept which especially affect anybody with a disability, let alone a learning disability.

Mr. Mahoney: I think there is a tendency, by the way, to view Radwanski as a report that has more status than it really has. It really has no status, other than the fact that it has been released. It is not something a legislative committee or the Legislature has given any status to. Frankly, I think the flavour of it came out in yesterday's questioning by a number of members of this committee, from all three parties.

On the issue of streaming when it comes to LD kids, to me, a learning-disabled child is streamed the minute he is identified as learning-disabled and streamed in very rigid ways–too rigid, in my view.

I too am a parent of a learning-disabled child and I went through the horrendous IPRC process, the intimidation tactics, the frustration, the fear, the lack of understanding, the "What do you mean?" and all of these problems.

Have you given some thought to whether we are being too rigid in, say, identifying and saying, "Okay, we've now identified you; you're

learning-disabled, you go over here and get in this box"? I am concerned that we are really doing harm to those kids in our great desire to deal with their particular disability, be it a subject disability, reading or some other form of comprehension, or whether it is perhaps more drastic, more serious than that.

I am just concerned that we have labelled these kids right off the bat. They have to deal with the social stigma of being learning-disabled, particularly when they are segregated. But even when they are integrated and withdrawn, when they go through withdrawal for a certain period of the day, I just wonder if there is not a better way of identifying the problem–obviously, you have to identify the problem–and providing remediation without it being identified as that, without it being stigmatized, without saying, "You are learning-disabled."

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I know from my personal experience, the difficulty my son had in dealing with the fact that, all of a sudden, he had this label on him that neither of his other two brothers had or none of his friends had. He considers himself just as smart as everybody else, and so do I.

Do you have any comments?

Mrs. Nichols: Certainly. I think there is a great deal of rigidity in a number of areas. The first thing that comes to mind from what you are saying is the dilemma, in terms of the way we do assessments–and this is something that we do have a lot of material on and we constantly go out and talk about to school boards, educators and so on–is that what we keep focusing on with these children is: "You cannot do this. You cannot do that. You cannot do the other. You are pretty awful at the next one as well."

Mr. Mahoney: We convince them, don't we?

Mrs. Nichols: We convince them beautifully and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Then, when they become the classic learned-helpless person, we wonder why they have no self-concept.

What we recommend all the time is that you start out by identifying, when you are assessing a child–any child; it does not matter what you are looking for–what are the things that this child is good at and where are the areas of strength. The value of that is that, in fact, for children with learning disabilities–but, again, for lots of other children–those areas of strength can be used so that the child acquires appropriate coping skills.

The problem with not doing that is that the children become convinced they are absolutely useless. Let's face it, as adults, if people kept on telling us how awful we were at various things, we would certainly believe them.

Mr. Mahoney: Our people do, actually.

Mrs. Nichols: Yes. I had that for eight years so I know how that is, but actually I did not believe a word of it.

You do accept after a while that if all these adults in your life are telling you how bad you are at things, you must be really bad. Whereas, if it is explained to you that you are really good at this, that and the other, now let's talk about how you, the child, can use those things that you are really good at to cope with the areas of weakness, then you create a completely different situation where the child is in control and accepts responsibility.

Secondly, I think it is also very important for children with learning disabilities to recognize that, in fact, there will be some things that it is not that they cannot do it, but they will not do it quite like other people in every kind of way and that it does not matter, because the goal really is not for every one of us to do things the same way. I use as an example the fact that I went to school in Hungary and so I learned to do long division in Hungary. If you looked at the way I do long division, you probably would not recognize it, but provided I do it as quickly as you do and get the right answer, it really does not matter.

There is that part of it, and the other part–and I will let Mrs. Ziraldo respond as a parent–is that on the whole issue of things like coping, self-advocacy and so on, the child has to be taught all those skills; and being learning-disabled is not necessarily a negative thing, if you compare it with being "dumb, stupid, lazy, that rotten kid," and so on. It can be enabling.

I do not know whether you saw the interview with Greg Louganis on the night that he got his first gold medal. He talked about the fact that when he finally found out he was not retarded but that, in fact, he had a learning disability which has prevented him from reading well and fluently for all his life but that he had other abilities, not only the athletic ones but other ways of acquiring knowledge, it was a liberating experience for him. That was because somebody actually sat down with him and talked to him about what it meant instead of just telling him, "You are really stupid because you cannot read like other people." I think we do a very poor job, as a system. I think many parents do a very good job of trying to boost their children's morale in this area.

Mrs. Ziraldo: Of course, as a parent I have to address this. My one son, who is very bright and

gifted in LD, for a long time did not understand what was going on. He knew he was very bright but for some reason something was not clicking and he could not understand it. Once he was told that he just processes that information differently and that his reading ability would improve, his whole self-esteem improved, his self-image and everything. Knowing that they were looking at his strengths and also looking at his need for a variety of strategies so that he could do the reading, and it was very important

For my other son, who is severely language-learning-disabled, to know that he learns differently and that it is okay to learn differently, is great for him. He could not function in a regular class with 30 other children and meet his potential. By looking at his needs, including the academic and the social and emotional, his needs are being met very well in that system in that school.

I think what we are trying to say provincially is that a lot of times that is not happening. We really need to continue to have that label, but we would have to look at it that they are persons first, they are children first, and then they have the learning disability. It is not a dirty word, it is not a bad word to say and there is nothing to be ashamed of. I think we need to stress that.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess my difficulty is that it is fine for us as adults–presumably mature, some of us, and capable of understanding that it is not a bad word–it is find for us to say that, but it is pretty tough for a seven- or eight- or nine-year-old kid to carry that label around when the other kids are perhaps giving that individual a difficult time.

I believe that we are all sort of disabled. Just as people from community living will say that we are all challenged, rather than handicapped, we are all challenged in various ways in life and I believe we are all disabled in various ways in life. I just take exception to the fact that it is necessary to label and identify someone as either gifted or learning-disabled. I would rather see us go to a point where, if we do come to the realization, through testing of all children, that a certain particular child perhaps seems to be brighter in certain areas or slower in certain areas, we simply design our educational program to fulfil his needs, rather than saying, "Okay, you go over here, you are gifted; you go over here, you are LD."

To be very candid with you, I am a little surprised that advocates like you, and I respect and admire what you are doing, are not taking a stronger position along those lines.

Mrs. Nichols: I guess the reason we feel very strongly that the designation has to be maintained is because our association, in its 25 years of existence, has been a fairly pragmatic one. While our mission statement that we fly with is the attainment of a society where every person, including those who have learning disabilities, is enabled to reach his potential, we firmly believe that there will come a time when it will be no more noteworthy that Lynn's children have learning disabilities or your child has a learning disability, than the fact that some of you wear glasses and some of you do not; some people have blue eyes and some people have brown eyes. We will just live with that.

The fact is that in today's world the only way that people get the kind of help, the kind of reasonable accommodation that will enable them, is by verifying that disability. That may not be the ideal, but it is a fact of life. We are concerned that if we started saying, "Let's get rid of the designation; let's just go with accepting that everybody learns differently," we would go back to the days when children with learning disabilities simply were the ones who stayed in grade 8 until they were 16 and old enough to drop out of school and disappear into the nothing world.

Perhaps it is a pragmatic approach and it is not a Utopian or idealistic approach. We recognize the ideal, but we also know that we spend a lot of time helping adults, for example, acquire the label because otherwise they are simply not getting the kind of employment opportunities and social opportunities they deserve.

I understand where you are coming from and I am sure that lots of families who have children with learning disabilities do. I think they also accept that given what is, they may in an ideal sense serve their own integrity and their own feelings by saying they reject the fact that anybody needs to carry a label; but that is really short-sighted in terms of service delivery that is essential for people with learning disabilities.

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That is why we advocate along those lines, but also, when we go out there, we talk about the fact that the issue is not for this adult when you are looking at employment–and I know that is beyond this committee's mandate–it is not just to acquire the learning-disabled label, but rather to look at the issue of reasonable accommodation without the label.

Madam Chairman: I would very much like to thank you both, Mrs. Nichols and Mrs. Ziraldo, for your presentation today. I found it both

articulate and very sensitive. I was particularly impressed by how, given the mandate of the Learing Disabilities Association of Ontario, you managed to fit it so well into our mandate.

Our final presentation this morning is from the Peel Board of Education. Please come forward. I was going to say good afternoon but I think we still have seven minutes before I can say that, so a belated good morning to you. Welcome to our committee. When I first saw your presentation and I was measuring it, I thought, "My goodness, this is quite a tome." But I did notice you put it in very large print so that Mr. Mahoney could understand it and read it.

Mr. Mahoney: They know me well.

Mr. McLean: So do we.

Madam Chairman: We are very much looking forward to hearing your thoughts today.

PEEL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. McKee: We appreciate the opportunity to express our opinions to this committee. We know you have a large task in front of you. We hope that you will consider some of the things that we have to say.

I am Margaret McKee. I am chairman of the Peel board. Beside me is the director of education, Bob Lee. Lynda Palazzi is our superintendent of programs. There are some others who are with us today. The associate director is Mr. Wayne Hulley. Carolyn Parrish is the chairman of our program committee. She is a trustee from Mississauga. Gary Heighington is a trustee from Bramalea.

Our spokesman today will be Mrs. Palazzi. As superintendent of programs, she will be presenting our brief.

Mrs. Palazzi: Thank you for hearing us today. It is a great pleasure for us to be able to be here. As you know, we are the largest public board in Canada, now serving over 90,000 students in our regular day program, as well as 45,000 in continuing education. We are very honoured to be able to share our experiences, our concerns and our views with you today.

We are proud of the way that Peel has been able to respond to the increasingly complex needs of a rapidly changing society, particularly in view of the background we have been working against, which is, as you are aware, unprecedented growth in Peel, which has taxed all of our resources, and of course the declining provincial financial support for education.

We would just like to share with you some examples of the Peel initiatives which we have been able to carry out, we feel, very successfully under current legislation:

Just this year we have introduced alternative education programs for students at risk of dropping out in grades 7 and 8.

This fall we introduced junior kindergarten which involves well over 5,000 students.

We have regional programs are in place in Peel, and several just in the last couple of years designed for students with specific interests. As a matter of fact, at the moment we have 821 students in our regional arts program.

We have three reception centres in Peel with extensive English as a second language/dialect programs for the many new Canadian students entering the Peel board.

We have pilot projects which mainstream students with intellectual and physical exceptionalities into our regular classes. At the moment we have just under 400 students who are mainstreamed in this way.

We also have introduced a very innovative way to highlight career options through our new careermobile which will be moving around from school to school in the large region of Peel this year. It carries with it information on nearly 1,200 different career options.

We have also just started a new venture with Northern Telecom and Unisys to provide an expanded communications network for students and teachers, and it will give us many opportunities to enrich our programs not only within Peel but also in other provinces and other countries.

We have made a very long range planning and financial commitment to implementing computers across the curriculum. In fact, we believe our computer plan is a model for Canada.

We have made many responses to meeting social needs, such as drug and alcohol awareness courses as early as grade 4, and this was far in advance of the ministry directions to do so. In fact, you will be interested to know that our recent video, which we did last year, on reporting child abuse won the Panasonic award last summer. We meet enormous numbers of needs in our continuing education program, which is now serving 27,000 adults in both day and evening programs.

I think you will be interested to know that we currently are having approximately 15,000 students who expand their education in summer school. We have a grades 4 to 8 remedial program, and last summer we had 4,200 students take advantage of that. We also have a Peel Summer Academy for the gifted, and we had 300 students in that program last summer as well.

Another thing that we think is critical is our ongoing evaluation of all of our programs to ensure that they are effective and meeting student needs.

We are currently committing $1.3 million to board-wide professional development, and we are pleased at the moment that we have 1,150 students actively involved in co-operative education programs.

Another venture this fall is the research that Peel is undertaking together with the Ministry of Education into how children learn through talk. This is a three-year project which will end with Peel hosting an international conference.

As Canada's largest public school system, we are proud of our record, achieved in spite of so many odds. We think that education, like much of the society it serves, is in a very serious transitional state. We believe that the critical issue which faces your committee, and indeed society, boils down to a critical question: What should a school system today and in the future actually be all about?

We believe conceptually that the school is one of the last stable institutions in our society, and we are forced, as you know, to play a significant role not only in educating but also in addressing many of society's problems.

While our major goal is educational, we frequently find ourselves in the dilemma of having to go beyond this goal if many of our students are to benefit from their learning experiences in the schools.

But on a more practical level, this poses some problems. First, the school system is asked to address a whole series of social concerns ranging from drugs and alcohol to acquired immune deficiency syndrome, values, etc. We are asked to develop independent problem-solvers and creative thinkers. We are asked to ensure smooth transition from schools to the workforce.

Second, in spite of all these demands, we only have so many hours in the day, so many days in the year and limited resources. This presents us many challenges of setting priorities.

Conceptually, of course, you can make a case for trying to do everything. Practically, however, it is difficult to do everything and do it well, at least within our current organizational structure and resourcing. And if we cannot do them well, obviously there is a question: Is there a point in attempting to do them all? These are difficult questions to answer, but I think that they suggest the reality that education today faces.

We hear the criticisms from business and industry that we are not producing a more skilled and competent workforce, but we wonder too what efforts industry is making to assist us to maintain the levels of technology and skills that are so critical to running the technologically sophisticated industries of the future.

We are definitely in a period of transition, and it is difficult to see what the next educational structures or stage should be. Your committee faces a formidable challenge. But we believe that one fact is clear: We cannot force students of the 1990s into organizational and societal moulds of the 1960s and 1970s. Peel does not have the answers, but we believe we should explore the alternatives together. However, we caution that any sweeping educational structural changes in the way we deliver education can only further serve to undermine the confidence of the public and the professional integrity of educators.

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However, if education is to satisfy the increasingly complex needs of our current society, perhaps we had better rethink the way we currently do business. Is it time to consider the 12-month school year, the extended school-day that is far more in sync with the realities of our communities and our working environment? In fact, of course, we almost have a year-round system now. Perhaps the ministry should consider funding for both July and August to give us even more flexibility.

We believe no other institution or industry in our society is better equipped or in fact struggling harder than education to meet the ongoing objective of challenging students from such myriad social, cultural, racial and economic backgrounds.

We are prepared to continue to explore alternative ways of providing education as we have been doing for the broader range of students we now have with the many different needs who fill our schools. But it is very important to note that language and cultural differences, physical and mental exceptionalities, as well as the varying degrees of parental support, all affect the success rate of a very diverse student population.

Therefore, there is no simple answer to such a complex problem. You know that in the last 30 years, we have already experienced a number of sweeping changes in Ontario's educational system: We have had the Robarts plan, we have had Hall-Dennis, we have had OSIS. Yet the original problem still remains: How do we make our schools more responsive and more attractive to the needs of all students, or is this an unrealistic expectation? Should we be looking at some alternatives?

We believe the heart of the issue is: What is the real role of education in shaping the future?

We do not believe that OSIS and its corollaries of streaming, grade promotion and semestering are the critical issues. We are pleased that you are meeting and hearing and having so much positive input from so many different groups. Positive communication about the efforts education is making, its problems, its successes, its failures, is critical. It is difficult for educators to operate most effectively when we are buffeted on all sides, from business and industry, from communities and parent groups, from the press, when we appear unable to be all things to all people.

More public awareness of the complexity of the issues we are dealing with day by day may bring more understanding of the realities we are living with and dealing with. Boards such as Peel are working hard to implement the last change, OSIS. For example, we spent $2.3 million in 1987 alone to provide the resources required to implement OSIS. In addition, we have a principal assigned full time to co-ordinate this implementation. We feel strongly that OSIS should not be abandoned before it has been fully implemented.

Having said all that, we also believe we would like to encourage some piloting and some alternatives around the following lines, perhaps a relaxing of the current OSIS requirements in grades 9 and 10 that forces students to select courses at the advanced, general or basic level.

We would like to suggest exploring and piloting these types of programs for grades 9 and 10: setting up integrated learning packages with far more integrated content than currently exists; reducing the number of teachers who come into contact with students in grades 9 and 10 from the current eight to three or four, which would encourage increased pupil-teacher contact as well as encourage the mentoring that this age group needs so critically.

We would like to see the time required to complete these packages be flexible, with different types of outcomes at different levels, so that students, according to their abilities, their learning styles and their needs, would be able to move through them according to their own time lines. This would require some modification of our current time allotments in grades 9 and 10.

We would like to see a division of the packages into both compulsory core and special interest areas so students at this exploratory stage would have access to technical programs, business and the arts, which are so important to a totally rounded education in this age group.

We would like to see a delay in choosing any options until well into the second half of that grade 10 year.

We believe this kind of programming would provide additional time both for student maturation and for parental and school assessment of student interest and ability before far-reaching decisions have to be made as to which program a student should choose in senior divisions.

At the senior level, advanced-level courses for university-bound students are working well. We need to rethink our delivery of senior courses for those not going on to post-secondary education.

Peel submits respectfully to you that there may not be one perfect answer, let alone one more provincially mandated response, to the complex problem of making our secondary schools more responsive to the needs of adolescents and more compatible with the demands of business, organized labour and industry. In fact, we think it is important, given the fact that school reflect the attitudes of society, that we consider that perhaps it may be these attitudes that stand in the way of our ability to provide more equitably for all students. We believe that any answer has to be multidimensional, involving far more interface between school and society.

We encourage developing a number of alternatives to meet broader student needs than schools are currently able to do on their own. More extensive co-operative education opportunities need to be encouraged: the expanded adopt-a-school school program, sharing of certain facilities and perhaps staff between local industry and schools.

The alternatives really are endless, limited only by our imagination, energy and resources. Peel believes, however, that with fresh support, with new partnerships with business, organized labour and industry, we will find new alternatives because these people will be on the cutting edge of innovation with new skills and technologies.

We will now talk briefly about the areas of streaming, grade promotions and semestering.

Streaming, with all its dangers of self-fulfilling prophecies, has to be weighed against its alternative. Even if we could supply the resources, physical, emotional, intellectual, we could not bring all children to the same level of readiness; nor is it realistic to expect all young people to reach the same levels of achievement. To put children into unrealistic situations is also to cause them loss of self-esteem.

A similar conflict arises over the issue of grade promotions. Common sense tells us that all

children will not equally master the key objectives of a program within the same time frame. Peel believes that its current method of grade promotions is, however, realistically meeting the needs of the vast majority of our children. Children are promoted on the basis of our professional judgement or retained only after careful and individual consideration of academic and emotional ramifications. In fact, by the end of grade 8, one out of every five students has repeated a year.

Semestering seems to be meeting student needs under OSIS. It provides students with a flexible way of earning required credits and, in fact, it gives students who may require additional time that option without any loss of self-esteem. Semestering also provides students who do leave school with the opportunity to re-enter midyear.

Peel also sees the growth of continuing education as a positive alternative to providing another way to extend and complete a secondary education, and it is obviously a route that many are taking. Education should be publicly commended for the positive impact it does have in providing a focus of stability, not only for students but also for the larger community.

Perhaps a wider appreciation and understanding of the massive changes that education has already gone through, has had to go through in order to make possible the gains in special education, which have been extraordinary, in French-language instruction, in teaching multicultural and sexual equity values and in keeping up with the incredible rate of technological change, would help bolster the confidence and self-esteem of teachers, administrators and trustees who are working to the best of their abilities and to the limit of their resources to meet the continual change and, of course, criticism.

We believe it is time to encourage and support a new kind of educational leadership, which will develop and promote alternative solutions to help education respond to the complex problems it is now meeting and will continue to be meeting in the future.

As you are aware, the extensive research done over the last 15 years on effective schools has all reached the same conclusion, that the effective school depends upon the quality of the instructional leader. We need to develop more entrepreneurial educational leaders who are encouraged to seek innovative solutions appropriate to their schools and their communities. We also need to encourage more students to recognize that learning itself, at whatever level, is a vital process that does not stop when they leave school, that education is for living, not a preparation for living.

Interjection.

Mrs. Palazzi: Did I go too fast?

Mr. Mahoney: When you say "entrepreneurial," he gets upset.

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Mrs. Palazzi: Oh, he gets upset with "entrepreneurial." I see.

Peel is looking for additional ways in which the Ministry of Education might collaborate with us and would like to encourage the ministry to:

1. Support educational leadership in the school improvement process and concentrate resources on this critical group to enhance its skills, raise the status of members of this group and give them more responsibility and accountability to respond to the school community in the educational process.

2. Rethink teacher training to ensure it is compatible with the pedagogical and administrative strategies critical to today's schools, which are dealing with so many complex problems.

3. Refrain from introducing any sweeping educational changes before OSIS is fully implemented. The educational community cannot respond effectively to still another sweeping upheaval.

4. Enhance the role of the teaching profession. Create more openings at the faculties by attracting those with the communication and personal skills required not only to motivate and excite students but also to involve their communities in ongoing partnerships.

5. Emphasize the critical role of continuous and intensive professional development of teachers to keep abreast of the continual changes in technology. Without a capable and committed teacher and administrative cadre, real change is severely limited.

6. Encourage co-operative education for students of all abilities and interests.

7. Continue support of microcomputers in our schools so that we can reach the ideal, which is more individualized instruction via the use of the computers and the use of the teacher to oversee and evaluate the applications of knowledge to ensure that learning has taken place.

8. Strive towards achieving its goal of identifying and measuring student outcomes at all levels of the system.

9. Maintain a flexible version of streaming different programs in the senior division, which addresses individual needs, abilities and interests of students, while providing the literacy and

numeracy required for self-esteem and productivity.

10. Enlist the support of other government agencies, businesses, organized labour and industry to recognize that for the schools to succeed, a commitment to sufficient resources must be made. Schools remain a stable institution among all others in a rapidly changing society. They must be supported to serve the future.

Finally, Peel would like to state to the members of the committee that we believe we are doing the best job we possibly can, given, first of all, the complex task that we are now engaged in, and secondly, the resources that we have available. We are constantly, however, trying to do better. The wellbeing of our children and their ability to survive in an unknown century only 11 years away is our goal. So we commend you on your work, and we are very pleased that we have been able to be a part of your deliberations.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Linda. You have left about eight minutes for members to ask questions.

Mr. Mahoney: At the risk of being totally parochial and making my colleagues angry with me, I just want to say that it is a terrific brief.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is not parochial; that is objective.

Mr. Mahoney: You are surprised that I would say that, I am sure, Richard, but it really is because I think it really gets right to the nuts and bolts of what we are all about and what we are trying to wrestle with.

I want to ask though. At some point in the brief, you said you do not think the issue that is vital to these deliberations surrounds things like OSIS, streaming, semestering and grade promotion. I would be concerned if we went away from what I consider to be the nuts and bolts of the whole OSIS plan in evaluating where we as legislators think education should be going and concentrate too much on philosophy and the general type of approach to education.

When we were trying to understand the mandate that was written for us in the Legislature, which Mr. Johnston consistently mentions as being very difficult to understand, I think we came to the consensus that the issues surrounding OSIS really are what it is all about. Are the kids going to be happy? If they are happy, they are going to learn better. Are they going to be effectively served through the streaming process and the semestering process? Should we be promoting through grades, social promotions or the credits, simply allowing subject promotion to take place instead of grade promotion?

I am just a little concerned that maybe you tend to say, "Put all the nuts and bolts aside and let's talk about the general philosophy surrounding the thing." I wonder if you might respond to that.

Mrs Palazzi: I would be pleased to, Mr. Mahoney. In stressing the importance of entrepreneurial type of educational leadership–the creative principal can take OSIS, which contains a tremendous amount of flexibility, other than in the aspect of selecting of different levels of ability–that is causing some major concern now, the students having to be forced to make those decisions as early as grades 9 and 10. If that area could be opened up, if we could have an opportunity to develop different kinds of learning packages that would provide more mentoring of the students at that age level as well, then I think the rest of OSIS would be seen in a very different light, and we might have some very significant outcomes.

Mr. Mahoney: If they do not make their decisions until after they and their parents have had an opportunity to have some experience and perhaps the teachers have had an opportunity to get to know the kids and have a little more impact into that ultimate streaming decision.

Mrs. Palazzi: Yes. OSIS also provides us with a lot of alternatives. A board like Peel is able to take advantage of some of those alternatives, just as we did in offering of alternative programs to students in grades 7 and 8 this year–a board which has the flexibility to offer regional programs. There is a lot of flexibility within OSIS for the entrepreneurial leader to take advantage of if he is able and resourced sufficiently to do so. That does involve resourcing, and it involves a tremendous amount of community co-operation and understanding.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I have a supplementary on those alternatives somewhere along the line?

Mr. Mahoney: I will let that go, I just wanted to say I think entrepreneurial leadership, as much as it causes twitching and anxiety over there, is probably a good term because it–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Whatever happened to innovation?

Mrs. Palazzi: Innovative leadership is fine.

Mr. Mahoney: Innovative leadership would be the same thing, I assume. If they want to allow the supplementary, I do have another question.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mahoney, if you quit waving those red flags at Mr. Johnston, we might progress a little more quickly.

Mrs. O'Neill: I find that a very interesting concept, and I do not believe anyone else has

mentioned that to us, an alternative to grades 7 and 8. Could you tell us a little more about that?

Mrs. Palazzi: We have just started it this year. We were finding students as early as grades 7 and 8–that is when you start to see a lot of the very serious risks coming through. So rather than put them into the same types of programs where we sensed, through extensive counselling and guidance, that they might not be successful for whatever reason–often it is home problems, emotional problems–we set up two centres, one in the north and one in the south staffed with specially chosen personnel, and we put 16 students in each of these programs. They are getting busing, and the program is a much more relevant program using a lot of a life skills type of approach based on what is relevant and usable, and of course with a much smaller pupil-teacher ratio and focusing on their individual needs. So it is very different from the normal grades 7 and 8 social interaction.

Mrs. O'Neill: We do not yet know what that will do to them at the end of this year.

Mrs. Palazzi: No. We have just started that this year. As I say, it is one of our examples of what we are trying to pilot, the alternative ways, innovative educational leadership.

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes. I am sorry. Mr. Johnston says I should be corrected; there are four of them, and I hope Hansard will correct that.

Mrs. Palazzi: I should like to add that we also have in Peel some alternative programs for students in grades 11 and 12, which have been in Peel now for a number of years, called INDEC. They have been very successful there. We have several hundreds of students in those doing extremely well.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is more common across the province than grades 7 and 8. Thank you very much, Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: Mr. Radwanski would consider you rebels and just outrageous to be doing such wonderful things. I do not want to read between the lines, if I am reading incorrectly, but on the questions you asked about the 12-month school year and the extended school day, is the implication that you support that happening?

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Mrs. Palazzi: I think the Peel board is certainly eager to find alternatives that will meet broader student needs than we are currently able to do. To speak just from a personal standpoint at this point in time, I personally would like one day to be able to see a 12-month school year, running perhaps 16 hours a day, based in modules where you could have students moving in and out of different modules. It would be meeting community, family and economic needs as well as education needs. That way, none of us would be forced to finish something in X hours or X weeks.

I think the interface of that would allow for professional development of teachers; for teachers to be far more cognizant of what is happening in industry and business; for business to come in and be a part of education in a far more practical way than we are currently able to do; for students, say, who want to finish more quickly or for students who want to take a longer time. It would avoid a lot of the sort of packaging in small boxes that someone mentioned earlier if we had those kinds of options.

Mr. Mahoney: So it would not necessarily be the summer holiday type of concept. Different students might take their vacations at different times of the year.

Mrs. Palazzi: Exactly.

Mr. Mahoney: More attuned, I guess, to life and to industry.

Mrs. Palazzi: Yes. The same for teachers. If a teacher wanted to have the opportunity to teach four modules a year, fine. If a teacher wanted to do two or one in the winter and one in the summer, fine. The number of people I think you could bring into education that way would be fantastic.

Mr. Mahoney: I have a number of other questions, but I think I will allow others to ask questions. I will just say that there was also–perhaps again reading between the lines–a comment with regard to criticism of the educational system and the self-esteem of teachers. I thought Lloyd Dennis made an interesting comment yesterday. He made several interesting comments, but one of them around that was that while we have a really good system, criticism is quite natural, and we should be open to it, accept it, look at it and evaluate it for what it is and not be too defensive about it. I am not suggesting you were, but you used the term, "We must defend education." I think we should maybe relax on the need to defend what is recognized as an exceptional system. Is there some justifiable criticism that we could learn from?

Mr. McLean: On a point of order, Madam Chairman: I wonder how long you plan on going? I have another appointment at 12:30. It is almost that now and Mahoney keeps going here.

Mr. Mahoney: I am finished. I said I was finished. I do not think you need to get your knickers in a twist.

Mr. McLean: He kept on talking. How long are we going to continue? Are we going on till one?

Madam Chairman: I anticipate we will wind up within the next five minutes. If you do have an engagement you have to go to, perhaps Mr. Johnston would not mind if you asked your question now.

Mr. McLean: Thank you. The question I have is very brief. Throughout your brief, you indicate very strongly teacher training at all levels, and you talk about retraining in different parts. Why are you emphasizing that so strongly in your brief?

Mrs. Palazzi: Look at the provincial average. I believe it is now well in the early forties, although this year we were very fortunate to be able to bring in a lot of new young teachers. Very few of us were trained to deal with the complex situations we are facing now in our classrooms. In an average classroom–this is based on statistics, certainly in a board such as Peel–you would have perhaps two gifted children and three children who speak no English at all, who are getting support but who are there for a great part of their day. You might have a child who has been sexually, emotionally or physically abused in the last 48 hours. You may have a child who has come to school hungry. This is the reality of life in the classroom, and teachers need constant support and training to learn alternative strategies not only as to how to keep the learning process a priority but also to deal with all those other challenges and keep the class moving along. That is why I say that.

Mr. McLean: On the point that Mrs. O'Neill brought up about grades 7 and 8, I am delighted to see that. It would certainly be interesting to find out what results you get out of that. I think it is very important.

The final question is with regard to your computer program. Have you this year advanced the computer program substantially? Have there been a lot more computers put in your schools?

Mrs. Palazzi: We are in the second year of a three-year plan. Approximately 50 per cent of all Peel schools now have the Icon computer which has the ability to be networked. Now, they are not all hooked up for networking as yet, but by the end of the school year 1990, they will be. We already have a number of projects in Peel where you watch children who are actually interacting not only within their own classroom but with other classrooms and the level of self-concept and achievement when that happens is almost miraculous to watch.

Mr. McLean: Were you one of the boards that was told to go ahead and purchase computers and then the ministry withdrew some of the funding?

Mrs. Palazzi: Yes, we were one of the boards. We lost approximately $107,000 in hardware acquisitions. We were given $106,000 for software acquisitions, so we used it to balance out. So, that was a major problem for us, as you can appreciate.

Mr. McLean: Those nasty people.

Madam Chairman: Yes, we also heard of that problem. I believe it was Sudbury, was it not?

Mr. McLean: All over.

Madam Chairman: A final question by Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have a couple of things I would like to raise. First, even though I am not from Mississauga, I thought it was a very good brief and appreciated the way you laid it out and I am aware of a number of the initiatives you take in Peel. I think they are very positive. But let me be provocative instead of being complimentary. I think that is too easy to do and that is for the local member, not for the opposition critic.

Mr. Mahoney: I did not think I was totally complimentary. I was a little bit provocative.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Nobody–oh, never mind. One small question. Your Grade 4 level of drug abuse counselling or education; does it deal with anything more than smoking?

Mrs. Palazzi: Grade 4 deals with the overall substance abuse that gets into smoking and grade 5 gets into alcohol. It is a two-year program, grades 4 and 5.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have often wondered what was so distinct about smoking from alcohol that it could not be dealt with in Grade 4, but that is one of things that has just confused me.

I am interested in a number of things that came out in this. One is that your co-op education numbers are 1,150.

Mrs. Palazzi: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What percentage of the students in senior school, 10, 11 and 12 let's say, does that represent? I have no idea how we can judge–and this is where the question leads–how successful our co-op education has really been by some of the numbers we have been receiving. I would like to know what the percentage is of the general student population and then how you measure whether or not we are getting enough

co-op opportunities for kids within the system. I mean, it is a huge system.

Mrs. Palazzi: I cannot give you the actual breakdown. My guess certainly would be that they are largely senior school students. It is difficult, however, to find enough places to send students in co-operative education, so what we do is manufacture some of our own placements. We create, in essence, almost job placements in schools and send senior students into other schools to help work out. We do peer counselling. We do a lot of things in that area.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is great.

Mrs. Palazzi: So, we need more opportunities of co-operative education.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But how many students are there? Let's just take 11 and 12. How many would there be in the system?

Mrs. Palazzi: We have 30,000 in our secondary program. So, 15,000 perhaps in the senior division.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So, it is talking 10 per cent or so?

Mrs. Palazzi: That is right.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: In some ways, it seems like a really good number in comparison with some things we have seen. In other cases, we would think what we want co-op ed to do, especially when we start talking about peer mentoring and all that kind of thing, it seems to me it should be the kind of experience that should be available to the majority, not the small number. And that is just something that jumped out at me.

Mrs. Palazzi: Yes. But we cannot do that alone.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, no. I am just thinking about this more in terms of our concepts of what we want co-op to do in the future.

Mr. Lee: Let me answer that. It takes a more mature student to deal effectively with the co-op ed program and that is why predominantly, they are in the senior division. We talked about the flexibility we are asking for in grades 9 and 10. We did not see that particularly extending to a co-op ed situation. I think the–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But I think we are saying it is 11 and 12 when we are talking about 10 per cent of the 11 and 12, or less than that, participating.

Mr. Lee: I think the next point though is that you have to look at it while it has been growing. Co-op ed is a relatively new program and it takes a while to become established, more so in the business community than in the school community. I do not have the figures here, but in our experience in co-op ed, it has been growing rapidly. And I would say that will continue.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Well, if you could send us those statistics, that would be great.

Mrs. Palazzi: Yes, we certainly can.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And also a breakdown of where the placements are because I am much more interested, frankly, in a broader range of experience than just the straight business notion of co-op than maybe other entrepreneurial members are. So, I would be interested in seeing–

1230

Mr. Lee: Or innovative you mean.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes, if only they were innovative. One out of five kids prior to grade 8 repeats in our system. That is shocking, especially when we are hearing so much about how grade promotion notions do not seem to be used pretty much any more. That struck me as a high figure. Do you know if it is a high figure? Do we have anything to compare it with across the province? Do other people keep those kinds of statistics? Do I have to ask for them from the ministry?

Mrs. Palazzi: I cannot tell you that. I can tell you that we keep a very close watch on those statistics ourselves, however.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would like to ask the ministry if we can get a hold of that information across the province because I think it is a fascinating figure and I have no idea what it relates to. When I think of one out of five repeating, it strikes me as high.

Mr. Lee: I would suggest that is probably pretty close to the norm. Many Peel students come in from other systems because we are growing, with new communities and so on. I do not think that is unrealistic if you look across the province.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is just that the notion of retention seems to have been really downplayed by most people who come to us as a significant factor. When I think one out of five, that is sort of the NDP vote; that is a lot. We deal in different senses of realities, even the Liberal majority has to understand.

Mr. Keyes: You probably know that most of them are not a repeat of a year, but it has meant that an extra 20 per cent have taken one extra year to get to the end of grade 8. I think that would have been a nicer way of phrasing it. I am sure, knowing Peel, they have not retained children

but rather that 20 per cent of their students have taken one extra year to get to the end of grade 8.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Can we not see a better breakdown of that?

Mrs. Palazzi: I was trying to check out whether we could give you an exact breakdown of the children and we do not have those statistics. But the research department, as late as yesterday, said that its best reading on it–and we have an excellent research department–is that the majority of those children will come to us with either specific learning disability problems or English as a second language problems and need that extra year to become more comfortable. These decisions are made with a tremendous amount of thought and care. They are not made lightly.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No, I do not doubt that. I really would like to have it very clear as to how many are actually being held back and how many are taking a little longer. It would be very important to know that distinction.

I have a facile comment I would like to make about the junior kindergarten expansion that your board is getting into this year. It strikes me that front-end loading of programs for kids and early identification are very positive things.

Mrs. Palazzi: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How many of your schools have day care in them at this point? I am noticing a new trend, which is that the boards now believe, because of the competition between the Catholic and public boards especially, that the earlier you get the kid into your system, the more likely he is to stay in. I think junior kindergarten is a perfect example of that, as I see it around the province. I am not sure how much of it is for pedagogical or identification reasons and how much of it is competition for tax dollars, but that is another matter. I am happy to see it happening. I am wondering how many of your schools have day care, whether that is a new trend we are going to see and whether, even at old schools, boards are going to try to get more day care happening in the schools so they can go from day care to junior kindergarten and stay within the system.

Mrs. Palazzi: Our new schools all have day care built into them, which is a ministry requirement. Twenty of our 27 secondary schools have day care programs as part of their family studies programs in the schools. They run parenting and day care programs. Almost all of our schools now have the Peel before and after school care as well, which is in a form of day care.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And a major co-op opportunity in secondary as well.

Mrs. Palazzi: Yes.

Mrs. McKee: But the Peel board, if I may add, has not gone into day care on its own because we basically have not had the additional space over the last few years to be able to provide that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is true; that is one of the problems. One thing that struck me from your report, when we talk about the successes and failures of the system, and there are many successes–and I am glad you have enumerated them and taken that kind of approach–is that the major failure of the education system in many ways to me is its failure to deal with those people in the lower socioeconomic groups and to understand that they are the ones who continually get streamed low, who come out with the worst educational outcomes and, therefore, stay in low-paying jobs and the cycle of poverty continues itself.

I would like to know what kind of tracking you do of kids on a socioeconomic basis to know whether we are not just maintaining the same kind of general outcomes that we have had for 50 years in terms of poor kids in the system.

Mrs. Palazzi: I am not aware of that kind of tracking. I am aware that we track our vocational students. At least in some of the schools, students in vocational programs have been tracked, and many of those have been very successful.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Have you analysed them on a socioeconomic basis?

Mrs. Palazzi: Not that I am aware of, no.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Can I ask why? I have asked the other question lots of times and I got the same answer, but we know from studies, that every study that has ever been done on a socioeconomic basis shows there are these outcomes. This is not to blame the education system alone for this by any means; I am not suggesting that. But if you are looking at outcomes, kids from poor families and certain groups such as natives in our society and the French community, generally speaking, in our society, up to a few years ago at any rate, tend not to do well in the education system.

Why do we not do more systematic tracking and goal-setting around that particular notion? Instead, we deal with, as you say, English as a second language, which can be one of the problems of a certain segment of that group, or

we deal with learning disability problems, but we do not target that notion, which all the statistics show has been problematic, in any of our reviews of modern education. Why do we not do it?

Mr. Lee: We have a little difficulty in getting at that information because parents are pretty sensitive. Without an in-depth interview kind of situation, it is pretty hard to get all that information. We have concentrated on the kids who are difficult to serve and we try to treat the kids and meet their needs, knowing full well that their home background is important. We have approached it from that point of view and not from the point of view of what strata they are in and we will deal with it from there. It is just a different way of going about the same thing, I think.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Not to be argumentative and extend people's lunch hours, the very fact that all of our goals for education are individually oriented and that we tend to look at them as self-actualization has denied the fact, it seems to me, that there may be broader social goals we should also be putting in, so that when we talk about kids in, say, a socioeconomic strata, more resources should be put in and different approaches to schools should be brought into those areas. Because we do not do any tracking, it seems to me we do not know what works and what does not work in the socioeconomic groups.

I guess what surprises me is we do all sorts of tracking in terms of language. We do it in terms of disability now and that kind of thing, but we have not done it on these other terms to be able to come up with models that might work. The one area that continually sticks out, the sore thumb of failure, if I could put it that way, throughout is this one group; whereas we have addressed many of the other concerns, as you say, with very innovative programs, some of which will touch some of these kids. But we have not looked at it as a goal itself to make sure their outcomes are as good as they could possibly be made and as close to the middle-class outcome as possible.

Mrs. McKee: The identification of their socioeconomic background is the difficulty, given that most of our communities are very mixed. We cannot identify it by community.

Mrs. Palazzi: Or by dress.

Mrs. McKee: That is right. We would have to ask them very personal information that I am not sure all parents would want to provide to a school system.

Mrs. Palazzi: Let me just give you an example. The Ministry of Housing provides scholarships for students living in Ontario Housing. Do you know how difficult it is for us to find students? Does the principal stand up and say, "All those students living in Ontario Housing come forward"? It is almost impossible to find out that kind of thing. You do not want to put a child in that kind of an awkward situation; so you are dealing with those kinds of problems sometimes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Again, if there were a strategy to make that important, there are a lot of ways to get that message into Ontario Housing and find those kids.

Mrs. Palazzi: Your concerns are very accurate and I think we have addressed some of those by saying that before, in many cases, we can educate, we have to address some of society's problems. With our current level of resourcing and staffing, even in accommodations in Peel, we cannot do more than we are currently doing.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is one of the reasons I do not think the goals have recognized these other needs. Until you have social goals as well as the individual goals, you will not get the resources to do it and, therefore, you will always have this failure, it seems to me. I may be alone in that thought around here.

Mrs. Palazzi: We are prepared to do it and we think we are the best people to do it, but you have to help us.

Mrs. O'Neill: I hope we will find a way to get into those public housing units because the statistics and the addresses are available from regional offices. Even if you have to send them to the home addresses and deal with it off the school property, I think that surely those scholarships are being picked up.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Johnston. As usual, you have kept your questions very short and succinct and we appreciate that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I always try my best.

Madam Chairman: Fortunately, Mr. McLean has left or I think he would be apoplectic by now; so thank you for allowing him to go first.

I would very much like to thank the Peel Board of Education, not only for its excellent presentation here today, but also for the very innovative and creative, not entrepreneurial work that it has been doing in the field of education.

Mrs. McKee: Thank you very much.

The committee recessed at 12:42 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:05 p.m. in committee room 1.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Miclash): Our first presenters are the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. Will they come forward, please? I understand we have given you one hour for your presentation this afternoon. Will you do the presentation and then leave time for questions towards the end? Before you get started, will you kindly introduce yourselves for the purposes of Hansard?

ONTARIO CONFEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS

Dr. Starkey: I am John Starkey. I am the president of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. On my right is Heather Webster, one of the association's staff.

We are pleased to appear before the select committee on education this afternoon to express our views on some of the current issues in elementary and secondary education. We have followed the progress of these hearings with great interest and we wish to present our perspective on issues which have already been raised to some extent by others. We do so because we do not wish to see Ontario lured into implementing policies which could result in a more rigid and unimaginative education system. This would ultimately be self-defeating. In technologically advanced societies, it is flexibility and creativity which are most highly prized.

As teachers at the post-secondary level, we are concerned about the preparation of students for continued higher education. While our remarks are presented in this context, we are not suggesting that our comments apply only to students in the advanced stream. It is our contention that the school system should treat every child as if he or she were destined for higher education. What this means in practice is having high expectations of all children and encouraging, by every means available, each child to meet or exceed those expectations. It means offering all children the opportunity to do work which is creative and intellectually challenging.

Perhaps the most important contribution the school system can make in preparing children for higher learning is to teach them how to learn, that is to say, to enhance their ability to learn. We are moving rapidly towards a knowledge-based society and it is essential that children are taught the means of acquiring new knowledge. They should be encouraged to be adaptable and to think critically and to communicate clearly.

We believe this is best accomplished in a system which is flexible, sensitive to individual differences and which seeks to educate the whole person, that is to say, to address social and physical development, as well as intellectual development. OCUFA opposed the implementation of policies or programs which concentrate only on the development of narrowly defined basic skills at the expense of other skills, or which ignore personal growth.

We do not dispute that every child should be encouraged to achieve the highest possible level of literacy and numeracy. On the contrary, we believe such skills are essential for survival in our increasingly complex society. We believe, however, that equally important is the attainment of such attributes as curiosity, creativity and the ability to think and work independently. Furthermore, we regard the development of a positive self-image as a crucial element in the education of a child. We believe, and studies confirm, that a sense of self-esteem is necessary in achieving academic success.

The school system must not impose rigidities which suppress either the spirit or the intellect. But not only must the school system avoid practices which undermine a child's self-confidence, it must go further and work actively to overcome any deficiencies in self-image which may be the result of such factors as social class, ethnic background or gender.

OCUFA shares the belief which has been expressed to you by others that educational streaming contributes to negative self-image and reinforces existing social inequalities. It is ironic that the very children who have the most to gain from the attainment of higher education, such as children from working class and ethnic backgrounds, are the ones who have the most barriers put in their way. At a time when we need a more highly educated citizenry than ever before, we are pursuing policies which virtually eliminate the possibility of attending university for too many of our children.

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We do not lay the entire blame for this situation on streaming. Far from it. While streaming ensures that certain children will never qualify for university entrance, escalating tuition

costs and artificially high entrance requirements ensure that even among those who are qualified opportunities will be limited.

OCUFA has sounded the alarm on other occasions over what we regard as a crisis in accessibility to university in this province. We have just completed a research paper entitled The Evolution of University Access Policies in Ontario: Access to a Higher Education Institution of the Government's Choice? and are pleased to make this paper available to the committee. You should all have received a copy of that paper. I commend it to you for your reading. You will see in that paper that our concern with access is twofold.

First, we are troubled by the continued failure of Ontario to ensure equal access across all social and economic groups in the province. The system has a long way to go in improving access for mature students, northern residents, native people, immigrant children, the socially and economically disadvantaged, the handicapped and women in those areas where they are still under-represented.

Second, we believe there are deficiencies in the overall number of students who are admitted to university. Despite a decline in the number of 18- to 24-year-olds in the population, the demand for a university education has grown steadily since the end of the Second World War and is now at an all-time high.

Recent polls indicate that the public regards the attainment of a university education as not simply a means to an end but as a positive goal in itself. Only a small number of Ontario residents feels that places in university should be based on the need for graduates in the workforce. A significant majority feels that places should be guaranteed for all who have the ability and interest, not just those with superior qualifications.

Successive Ontario governments have voiced their commitment to broad accessibility and until recently were generally supportive of university expansion. In the last decade, however, underfunding has become the rule, to the point that at the end of the 1986-87 year, the cumulative annual shortfall in base funding for universities amounted to $175 million, according to the Ontario Council on University Affairs, which is the government's own advisory body on university affairs. The consequence has been a limit on enrolments. Ontario universities have brought this about by raising entrance levels to unprecedented heights.

OCUFA is concerned that the present government is attempting to redefine the promise of accessibility to university for all qualified students in light of the inability of the system to absorb more applicants. We find now that the promise is not accessibility to university but to post-secondary education, that is to say, to university or a college of applied arts and technology. We suggest to you that the CAATs were created to provide an alternative to university; they were not intended to substitute for university.

There is a fundamental difference in the essential nature of the educational experience at universities and CAATs, and the distinction is worth maintaining. Research and scholarship at the university are conducted in a context which is predominantly academic. Some have called this "curiosity-driven"; others characterize it as arising from within the discipline as opposed to being imposed from outside the discipline. While we do not subscribe to the ivory tower view of the university, we do believe that university scholarship should not be unduly influenced by trends outside of academe.

The CAATs, on the other hand, were created in the 1960s to provide training of a technical nature for those who wished to proceed directly to certain types of employment after the completion of their studies. College education might be characterized as applied study. The CAATs are, and should continue to be, sensitive to market forces and demographic trends.

Students who have successfully completed secondary education should have the choice of attending either a university or a CAAT, based on the type of education which is appropriate to their needs and abilities. That choice should be determined only by interest and ability and not arbitrarily constrained by other factors.

The question of the interrelationship of the colleges and universities has arisen in the context of these hearings, and OCUFA believes that the time for such dialogue is indeed at hand. We agree that transferability is desirable between the universities and the CAATs, but caution that this is not as simple as some might imagine, given the different nature of scholarship at the two institutions.

We must also warn that allowing the transfer of college students to universities, along with destreaming or modified streaming at the secondary level, has the potential to put even more enrolment pressure on the universities. There have been reports in the press of late suggesting that the enrolment crisis has been averted and that

all qualified applicants have been accommodated. The experience of university professors, who are in the front lines in relation to the delivery of university education, suggests that this is not so. Can you say that students have been accommodated if they cannot get into their courses of choice, if they are sitting in the aisles, if they have to join a waiting line to take a book out of the library, if laboratory equipment is in such short supply that they must share with several others, if small classes are cancelled in favour of large lectures because the ratio of student to faculty grows larger every year?

We suggest to you that in circumstances such as these, students are not being properly accommodated and that the quality of university education in this province is deteriorating due to the continued underfunding of the universities.

In conclusion, OCUFA supports revisions to the school system which will allow more students to achieve the highest level of education possible, but we suggest that these initiatives are meaningless unless the government is prepared to address the serious difficulties being experienced at the universities. Access must be enhanced, but, we ask, access to what?

We would be happy to answer questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: John and Heather, it is nice to see you both before the committee. I appreciate the two documents, the one I received in August on access, and then today's presentation.

May I ask you just a few questions about the experience this fall in the universities around the problems of accommodation as you outlined them in the second-last paragraph? I was quite confused by the Council of Ontario Universities figures. They did not strike me as reflecting the situation in reality, let alone the outcomes of full access if that were actually taking place.

Which universities have actually increased their enrolments significantly? I remember when you spoke last year the University of Western Ontario had a policy of restricting its first-year enrolment to a certain percentage. I know Trent–I was just there the other day–has not increased its significantly–100 more than last year or something like that. Where has the increase taken place?

Dr. Starkey: You referred to Western's having a policy, a cap on enrolment. Queen's University, the University of Toronto, the University of Waterloo and McMaster University all similarly had caps on their enrolments and they announced in the spring that those caps would remain in place and that they would not exceed those enrolment figures which were based on the previous year. In the case of Western, it was 4,000 students into first year.

All five of those institutions have exceeded their caps. They announced early in the year that they were going to increase their enrolments. In the case of Western, it has increased its enrolment now to something in excess of 4,500, that is to say, a more than 12 per cent increase in first-year enrolments, and the other four large universities have taken similar steps.

Of course, at the moment we are still waiting for hard data on the enrolment figures; they are not finalized until the end of this month. The preliminary data we have seen suggest that perhaps it is only Trent which has not significantly increased its enrolment over last year. All the others from which we have data suggest significant increases.

If I may refer to another aspect of your question, I, too, find it strange to reconcile the notion that there is not a continuing access crisis, as you have said, when I just walk around the halls of my own university, the University of Western Ontario. On many of the doors there are signs saying, "This course is full." That is course, not program, so they cannot get into Sociology 20 or some similar course. In addition, there are students sitting in the aisles, notwithstanding the fact that this now known to be a dangerous thing to be doing from the point of view of fire and safety regulations. Nevertheless, there are students sitting in the aisles. Those who cannot get into the class and are still formally enrolled in the class are trying to scurry around picking up notes from other students, hoping that people will drop out so they will be able to get places.

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What I hear many of my colleagues saying at Western–and we are now in the first week of October, so classes have been going on now for three weeks–is that there is still a high state of chaos. There is still a lot of flux. There are still a lot of students whose courses are not yet finalized. There is an accessibility crisis.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Some of the information we have received recently from the high school level indicates that this crisis is occurring without the OSIS blip. What was presumed was that this was the year the accelerated students were going to be coming in, but in point of fact, and I forget the percentage or even the hard numbers, many students who have sufficient credits to get them into university now have decided to go back to high school this year and are doing fewer courses

and trying to increase their grades and taking part-time jobs in the meantime, so we have not actually seen the OSIS blip.

Dr. Starkey: If I may say on that, the information we have, and again, this actually comes from the Guelph centre, is that the vast bulk of the increase in enrolments this year–it is a 10 per cent increase in enrolments over last year, essentially, or certainly applicants. We cannot yet talk about enrolments until the figures are in. There has been a 10 per cent increase in applications this year over last year, and a large proportion of that increase in applications was from students in rural areas, rather than students who are fast-tracking in the high schools.

There has been a shift in the demography. There are proportionately many more students from rural areas attempting to get into university. As to whether they have succeeded or not, or the extent to which they have succeeded, we will have to wait and see, but there were certainly many more attempting to get into university than in past years. That is where the big increase has come from.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One last question. The one change in the demography I have noticed from the Council of Ontario Universities' figures earlier in the year seems to be the rural student. You basically seem to suggest that too when you say that the access problem for northern students, for poor kids, etc., seems to be similar now to what it has been in the past in the post-secondary education system. Is that accurate?

Dr. Starkey: Yes, that is certainly the way we see it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was really pleased at your comments about streaming, which might not have been expected to be seen from the post-secondary level in that that would be more of a concern perhaps for people who are not going on. That is the way certainly Radwanski and others have looked at it, rather than from a post-secondary perspective. I appreciate very much the presentation and the thoughts you have added to us.

We are going to be trying to come to grips with what we do about those questions of access to good education for those identifiable groups. Any practical suggestions you might have for us about what the system might do to change that would be useful. One thing that comes to mind is, what does the post-secondary institution do about it?

The native community was before us with two different representations. They indicated that in their community the large number of them that were going to university were going as mature students without the necessary academic qualifications. Is that something which can be expanded to other identifiable groups, as has been done in native studies programs, or is that something which is going to be peculiar to that kind of program in the various universities?

Dr. Starkey: As you can see, that very type of problem is a concern of ours, among many other groups. Another group that comes to mind is the immigrants, particularly non-English-speaking immigrants within Ontario. They are clearly disadvantaged, not because of any ability they may or may not have in whatever field they are in, but they do have language as well as probably social disadvantages to overcome. That is indeed a concern of ours.

On the native students, there is the added complication of the funding of native students within Ontario universities. Of course, that is a federal issue. They seem to be messing things up royally on that front at the moment too.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess one of the questions for us is, where do you lay the emphasis then and try to redress the problem? Are there avenues for doing that at the post-secondary level as well as for mediation at the secondary level and before?

Dr. Starkey: You have a problem with that. Not that we would argue that post-secondary education should not be involved in that process, but the fact of the matter is that the post-secondary institutions, the universities I guess I should say because that is what I am speaking to, are already overcrowded, as we have said. They just do not have the facilities. They do not really have the right environment to tackle that kind of problem. For that reason, therefore, it is perhaps not realistic to put that burden on the universities.

Mr. McLean: You talk about access. How many first-year students last year would not get back in again this year?

Dr. Starkey: Would not get back in? You mean getting back into second year?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Dr. Starkey: I am afraid I do not have the numbers on the number who at the end of first year drop out from the system. At the University of Western Ontario, it is a very small number. It is in the order of 100 to 150 out of roughly 4,000 who drop out at the end of the first year.

Mr. McLean: They drop out or fail, do not get back in?

Dr. Starkey: No. I am not talking about the ones who fail. These are students who could

continue. Again, I happen to be on a committee at Western that has looked into this. We do not know why, and there was a suggestion this year that maybe it was time we did some follow-up.

Mr. McLean: How many would there be who would fail and not go back, would have to wait a year?

Dr. Starkey: That I do not know.

Mr. McLean: I find that interesting because I know of several–I am not talking about one or two–who were told they were about 1.5 per cent short on their exam and they were told they would have to sit out a year. What is that student going to do for a year before going back to university? Is that not quite a slap in the face to some of these students, that it be said, "Now you have to wait for another year before you can go back to university?"

Dr. Starkey: Indeed.

Mr. McLean: What is wrong with our system then? There is something wrong if students are told they have not made it. Is it not discouraging for them to have to wait a year?

Dr. Starkey: Yes. It is certainly–again, to use the jargon we have used–putting another hurdle on a certain group of students, in this case, presumably, maybe the academically weak student. But one could make a very good argument that of course these are the very students to whom that hurdle should not be presented. We are presenting the wrong hurdle to the wrong people at the wrong time, but you are right, the universities do indeed do that. I think you would have to speak to the university administrators as to what the logic is behind that.

Mr. McLean: I did write on behalf of some of these students. I wrote to the dean and was told they could appeal, that there are processes there. It is very frustrating for these young people. I just thought to myself, "Boy, there is something wrong." There really is. So you have taken in 4,500 new placements during this term at Western.

Dr. Starkey: Yes, 4,500.

Mr. McLean: How many would have graduated, about the same amount? You only have so many places.

Dr. Starkey: Somewhat fewer. Normally, we would only take in 4,000 students. The number that graduated this year was something in the high–3,800, I think, was the total graduating class in the spring at Western.

Mr. McLean: I really do not have any more questions but the access really got to me. We were talking about enhancing access and here we are laying these people off for a year and then saying, "Well, come back next year." They might be very upset.

Dr. Starkey: If I may, there is something on that which certainly is not covered in our brief. In the university, the fact is that I may, for instance, have taught one of these students you are referring to, but I would not know. All I would know would be the grade I have given to that student, a failing grade, which would mean he would either have to repeat the course if he wanted my course to continue or would presumably go and do something else. But I would not know what else. That decision, as I just suggested, is made by the university administration.

At the risk of sounding perhaps a little radical, maybe what we are seeing here is one evidence now of a break that has been developing between the university teachers and the university administrations. Universities have been tending to become, in my view, industries. In so doing, they may well have become somewhat dehumanizing and out of touch with some of that clientele. I think that is something that would be well worth while looking into.

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Mr. McLean: If it had been only one or two, I could understand it, but there were several. I really could not put it together.

Mr. Keyes: I think I liked the first part of your brief fairly well, because it is something that applies basically to what we were talking about in our first two weeks in July when we were looking at the goals of education. It is wise to put those forward once again.

I do not want to get into the discussion because we are here to ask questions, but I could have perhaps launched into a bit of a defence of the government on the recognition it has had of underfunding of the system for some years, and how in the last two and three years there has been a significant increase in the annual funding, plus the additional funding this year for increased enrolment as an encouragement for universities to take more of these. But that would become kind of political and this committee is so nonpolitical that we would not want to get into those types of arguments.

Through your association, have you done the projections for the next five years in enrolment patterns? Perhaps I should have that from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. You were asked to take more this year. Part of that was on the basis of the double graduate coming out,

which did not quite materialize the way they thought it would. What do those projections show for the next five years?

Dr. Starkey: First, we do not have the capacity to make those kinds of projections, because we do not have access to those raw data. Those data are collected at the Ontario Universities Application Centre and through the ministry. If anybody looks at those, it is those organizations or the government's advisory body, the Ontario Council on University Affairs, which indeed has been commissioned to study some of that problem this year, and the Council of Ontario Universities, the organization which represents the administrations.

We do not have access to those data first hand at all. We only get them second hand through those organizations, so we ourselves have not made projections.

There are, of course, plenty of speculations that people have put in the press based on variance factors. First of all, there is going to be some effect of the double cohort at some point. How big, we do not know. It is not likely to be a double cohort, but it will be some increase if and when it happens. It did not seem to materialize this year, but eventually some of those students are going to start getting into the universities early, if they feel they can get into the universities, if they have good enough grades.

Second, we have seen this shift in the demography of students going to university. More interest in the rural communities was dramatic this year, in these data from the Guelph centre. That may increase or it may stay as it is at the moment, but there has been a dramatic increase in that constituency.

There also has been a further increase in the percentage of female students coming into university this year over last year. There has been a continuing increase over recent years in the number of mature students going on to university. All of these things point to a steady state or an increase in enrolments. Although I do not have any projections, as I said, it seems clear that there is going to be increasing demand on the universities, rather than less, over the next four or five years.

Mr. Keyes: In looking at that and just following along, it is not mentioned in your brief, but since we are seeing a different structure within the high schools through semestering, would you, as faculty members, see the need for universities to be more in tune with what is happening in the high schools in order to accommodate to a greater extent students who may leave? Also, is there a need to move the secondary school year more in tune with the universities so that there is a more in-sync type of opportunity?

Dr. Starkey: Again, I do not know if there are any hard data on this for the system as a whole. In my own institution, Western, we thought about this, and I happen to know that the University of Waterloo did the same thing and put in place some courses which started in January, with the notion that students would be able to get into those rather than starting in September. The trouble is that January is not quite the right time either, because most students do not finish high school until February. Maybe that was the reason that in fact those particular courses were not particularly well subscribed by new students.

What happened was that students who were there in September and for a variety of reasons could not pick up the course were able to get in in January, but new students coming in just did not materialize. How big the demand is, therefore, I do not know.

Again, just using some anecdotal information from some of my own children's friends who in fact finished high school at grade 13, many of them did not even think of going to university immediately, although they went in September. Many of them either chose to do Europe that year or to go and get a job for a few months to build up some money with which to go to university.

Mr. Keyes: That was why I prefaced it and made sure that I put some of the responsibility for that fact on the organization of the high schools, so that the high schools might end up with—we had one interesting presentation on trimestering of high schools so that then it would co-ordinate a bit better with the universities.

Dr. Starkey: That February-January dichotomy was obviously a real problem.

Mr. Keyes: I know time is up, but do you want to refer a bit more specifically to the area of barriers you talked about? We hear about them but you have not enumerated at all when you talk about the persons who are most hampered by our society on page 3, "Children from working class and ethnic backgrounds are the ones who have the most barriers put in their way." Are barriers actually put in their way or are they created by society? I am just trying to get around it. You seem to suggest that the education system put most of the barriers in their way. Maybe there is a slightly different way of looking at it. What would you consider to be most of those barriers "put" in their way?

Dr. Starkey: Again, it has to be anecdotal, of course. We do not have data on that since the secondary education system is not part of our mandate, but if I think to the local high school in London, Ontario, where I live, there was some quite rigorous streaming going on when my kids were in the early grades.

In one instance, the son of a very good friend of ours had a reading problem. In fact, it turned out he was dyslexic. It was diagnosed immediately, but as a result of that he was put into more applied streaming and eventually ended up going to Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology, which may or may not have been the right place for him to go. I do not know. But the fact was that he was streamed very early and this was not a unique case. I think it would have been very difficult for that student to change later on. He may have been able to do it in the first year or two of high school, perhaps in grades 9 and 10, but by the time you get to grades 11 and 12, I think it becomes very difficult to switch into the so-called more academic programs at that stage.

I think the barriers are there as a result of streaming within the high schools, and I think those barriers are a part of the system that has been put in place within the high schools. There are, of course, also barriers within society, as you say. Those are far more intangible, more difficult to get at.

Mr. Keyes: That may be more a cause of the latter problem, more societal barriers than necessarily educational ones.

Ms. Webster: I think we have suggested, though, that the school system has a responsibility in trying to overcome some of those barriers, that it has to play an affirmative role.

The Acting Chairman: Dr. Starkey and Ms. Webster, I would like to thank you for coming before the committee today. It was a pleasure hearing your brief.

We are a little ahead of time, but the next presenters are here from the Ontario Association of Business Education Directors. Please come forward. I would like to welcome you to the committee. For the purposes of Hansard, would you kindly identify yourselves. You have half an hour. If you would like to leave some time towards the end for questioning, we would appreciate it.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION DIRECTORS

Mr. Jeffrey: First, we certainly welcome the opportunity to be able to address this committee. My name is Gordon Jeffrey. I am the business education director with the London Board of Education, which is a large urban board of education. By my putting on my glasses you now realize I am getting on in years. This is my 25th year of teaching and I have five years' related business experience.

To my left is Doug Dodd. Doug has 22 years of experience as a teacher and as a business education director with the Lennox-Addington County Board of Education. The school Doug is at serves a community which is comprised of rural and suburban clientele. Doug has been actively involved with co-operative education, computer applications and adult education at his school. This year, Doug returned from a one-year secondment with the Ministry of Education at the regional office in Ottawa.

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As a bit of a preamble, our positions as directors of business studies in our respective schools require us to administer business studies programs. We are, and I wish to emphasize this, classroom teachers in addition to our responsibilities as directors.

The Ontario Association of Business Education Directors is an organization which has been in existence for 10 years. The goals are to provide opportunities for professional development of business education and to voice support and concerns for what we in business education feel is a vital component of Ontario's educational system. What we attempt to do with our association is, with newsletters and conferences, set up a communications network with the many directors and heads throughout the province.

We see business education as a very important part of the Ontario curriculum. We must suggest that we feel our responsibility is to instil attitudes, skills and knowledge which must be applied in a variety of situations. Our curriculum is very broad in scope and we seek to develop competencies in our students that may apply not only to commercial and industrial occupations, but also to employment in the professions, government agencies, hospitals and educational institutions. In other words, we see business studies as feeding into all these various types of occupations.

In Ontario, historically, the high schools or the secondary schools changed over to composite schools. With that, business studies expanded from an urban base to a much broader base throughout our province, whereby some of our rural schools were now given the opportunity to include business studies in their programs.

When the 1970s arrived, business studies grew. I think you all notice from our brief that our particular area ranked third behind English and mathematics as courses most frequently chosen by students. This information was produced from the principals' reports which are submitted to the Ministry of Education.

As I mentioned by introducing Doug, we were the pioneers in work experience and co-operative education.

In the 1980s, when the province asked for submissions to the secondary education review project, we certainly were very active in providing the people involved in that capacity with our input. As a result of OSIS coming in, we were very much enthused by the fact that we, as teachers and educators, were asked to provide input into the writing of the curriculum. We also were very active in supporting the ministry in providing updating courses for our teachers. As a matter of fact, these were just completed last August.

I would now like to turn it over to Doug.

Mr. Dodd: As Gord has pointed out, many educators were involved in the research and reports that came out of the Ministry of Education dealing with education in the early 1980s, the SERP report and the Renewal of Secondary Education report. With the publication of OSIS, we felt that it dealt a severe blow to business studies.

There seemed to be a great deal of support in OSIS for the concept of preparing young people for the world of work, for exposing them to business concepts, to help them in post-secondary education, yet when one looked at the document, there seemed to be little room for students to explore this area compared to what they had before. The number of credits that were required for graduation, as I am sure you are well aware, increased from 27 to 30, however the increasing of the number of compulsory credits from nine to 16 removed much of the room or the choice that students had enjoyed before.

In our report, we want to point out that we are not damning OSIS out of hand. There is support for OSIS in our organization. We certainly support the idea of the packaging of courses. As a matter of fact, business educators have been in the forefront of developing packages which benefit many students in many communities regardless of the level of difficulty.

We also applauded the recognition for students, on their transcripts, that a concentration in business studies would be noted. As a matter of fact, this was an affirmation of a practice that many schools were carrying on at that time.

The emphasis on career awareness was certainly strongly endorsed by us. It had been a topic that had been an integral part of our curriculum for many years.

We also supported, and continue to support, the concept of dof concern comes with the increasing of the compulsory credits from nine to 16, as I have mentioned before. It seemed, in reading the comments that were rampant at that time about OSIS, that the idea was that there would be a direct relationship between the amount of mandatory curriculum and the quality of education.

It is certainly not our intention to say that we feel students should not be aware of the vital skills of communication and computation, and certainly know of societal values, but it has been our position that we have reinforced these skills over the years. Indeed, do you give students more of these "core" subjects, or do you try to increase the awareness of the student by seeing how these apply in other areas? It is our feeling that by emphasizing the importance of these skills in other areas, students are reinforced in their learning. They can then apply it in the business world, in the university world, in their personal lives.

On page 6 of our report, we deal with streaming. As I have said before, we welcomed the streaming that was indicated under OSIS. As a matter of fact, under the HS1 system that we had been operating, there were things called open-level courses for students, where a fairly heterogeneous group of students could be taking a program.

To be quite frank, many of us found difficulty in meeting the needs of these students. In my own classes, at times, one would get what is called an inverted bell curve; in other words, there was a large number of students who were doing very well, there was a significant number of students who were not doing very well at all and hardly anybody was in the middle. I think that was very disturbing to us. We felt that streaming would help overcome this, that we could develop curriculum that would meet the needs of each group.

I do not think there has really been time for this process to work its way through the system. The Ministry of Education has developed curriculum guidelines which we find to be excellent. As a matter of fact, we were a key part of this development over the years. As Gordon has indicated, we have spent time providing in-

service for our colleagues and for ourselves to try to meet the expectations of the guidelines.

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What also has happened is that these guidelines are still relatively new. Textbooks have not been developed to meet the needs of these guidelines, as yet. Some have been developed, but certainly not enough, as yet. We are just now writing what are called second-generation documents. In other words, we are trying to take these guidelines in order to be able to apply them to a classroom situation, and that process is nearing completion. It is not completed, as yet. There is still a lot of work that has to be done in in-service.

We feel that if this is allowed to happen, perhaps it would be more appropriate, once this is in place, to take a look and see how we are meeting the needs of students at the different levels of difficulty. So, what we are recommending in this area is that there be some caution. Let's take some time. Let these things work through. Let's then, perhaps, make some decisions.

Mr. Jeffrey: The area of semestering is one on which Doug and I got together, because his school does not have semestering, whereas at my school, we do. We, as professionals, discussed this topic and felt very, very strongly that the whole idea of scheduling should be left to the local boards of education. We feel that, in this particular area, the local board is the place where the decision on scheduling should be made.

Grade promotion: This is on page 9 of the report. Doug and I, having gone through, both as students and as teachers, the past practices of grade promotion, feel very, very strongly that the change from grade promotion to subject promotion was a step in the right direction. The problems created by grade promotion back in the early ages, I think, were ones that we would not want to have any of our students go through. We feel very, very strongly that the subject-promotion policy should remain.

Mr. Dodd: On page 10 we start the list of eight recommendations that we have made. I will just go through them very quickly.

1. We would like all students to be given increased exposure to business subjects. We feel that this can be accomplished by two means. One is the reduction of the number of compulsory subjects presently required. Having read many things in the newspapers over the last few years, I doubt whether this route will be followed. There seems to be much more of a drive towards more compulsory subjects.

The other way that it can be accomplished, then, is by increasing the number of compulsories, by including one intermediate and one senior-division credit in business. We do not feel that this has a narrowing effect on the student. Our curriculum covers something like 92 different courses. We feel that there is a wide range of topics, of learning styles, interests and skills. As a matter of fact, under the old system of HS1, there were four areas of study, and I believe we had the only subject area which had subjects in each one of those areas.

2. We feel this recommendation is key: that learning outcomes in the key areas of communication and computation be identified. We not only want them identified, but also we feel that it must be the responsibility of all subject areas or subject disciplines to reinforce these.

Several years ago there was a policy called Language Across the Curriculum, which I think was excellent, where all secondary school teachers realized that there was a responsibility to reinforce proper language. Sadly, I do not believe that it was followed up enough. The impetus seemed to be lost and, after a while, the idea died. I think more initiatives like this could perhaps achieve what we are looking for, to give the student a chance to see the application of these and to make all teachers realize that it is an important part of their job to reinforce and to help a student to achieve these outcomes.

3. The three levels of difficulty defined in OSIS should be maintained. I think I have already spoken on that at some length, feeling that there is a need to get resources, people power, in place and then we can take a look and see how this is working. I do not think we know as yet.

4. We support, certainly, the concentration of student achievement and the recognition of this in the transcript.

5. The packaging of courses should continue to be encouraged. Once again, I think this was a very exciting thing that OSIS brought forward. I think again here is a chance for interdisciplinary co-operation, and I think this is happening in schools.

6. The government should continue to encourage partnerships between schools and business. I think this is something we have tried in our own, perhaps limited way, through our work experience, through our business liaison councils and ideas like that, which now we have seen growing into a full sharing with local business and, as a matter of fact, with other institutions. My own school is presently twinned with a care centre

near the school. Students go to the care centre, learn about the problems and help the people there, and they also add an awful lot to our school.

7. As Gord has mentioned, the present system of subject promotion should be maintained.

8. As he has also mentioned, school autonomy in determining timetable scheduling should be maintained.

Mr. Jeffrey: Just to conclude then, I will not bother to read page 13; it just sums up what we have said.

Perhaps as a final note as our presentation comes to an end, I mentioned at the outset that Doug and I are both practitioners. We are teachers. I would strongly urge the committee, in its recommendations, to seek out the members of the other subject associations. I believe every group, whether it be math, technical or family studies, has a network out there of professionals belonging to an association such as Doug and I do. I really feel strongly, and I am sure Doug shares this, that these associations would appreciate the opportunity to provide you with information about what they feel with respect to these topics. Thank you very much.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you, gentlemen. We did have that opportunity this morning. We had the technical educators here. I guess, to be blunt, in a sense this looks like what you are saying is like they said, "Don't gore my bull, I'll gore yours."

In other words, you are saying there are too many compulsory subjects, and then in the very next line you say it would be much better if we had compulsory subjects and credits in business education. Those are the exact words of the technical directors. There are too many compulsory subjects, but there should be compulsory technical ed in our system.

I think what you have to look at here is that it is not really so much for this committee perhaps as all those who are are engaged in this to look at it, and perhaps if we had the desires of all the subject groups that you are talking about, they would all want every subject compulsory. We might have 50 credits to graduate.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: All compulsory.

Mr. Keyes: Religion has to be in there also, because we have heard from all of the religious teachers and that has to be there as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Arts.

Mr. Keyes: Artists have to be in there, and we must have art.

Maybe we are going back full circle to where the only thing that should be compulsory are the number of credits that are taken and every person, every student, should be like the old Latin motto, caveat emptor, so that you put the onus on the student to decide. If he knows what the requirements are to go to community college or to the world of work or to university, he takes his choice of courses and he gets a degree.

Mr. Reville: Take their chances.

Mr. Keyes: You make your choices, you take your chances, as David is saying.

Mr. Reville: I didn't say that for the record, Mr. Keyes.

Mr. Keyes: These are the finest microphones. You wait until you read Hansard a week from now and you will be asked, "What were those two words you used?" Then you will be trying to think back to what you really said, as I was doing yesterday trying to correct mine, and I am still not sure what I said.

Mr. Reville: That is right, but don't worry, neither were the people who were hearing you.

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Mr. Keyes: To make some comment about it, because this is where I think–I taught school for about the same length of time as the two of you combined.

Mr. Reville: Seventy-five years: that is a long time.

Mr. Keyes: There is the problem you are running into. Every subject group would come before us and say that it believes in order to give a well-rounded education to a person, it should be included as one of the compulsory credits in order to gain that graduation.

Mr. Dodd: Once again, if you take a look at our recommendation, the first recommendation was that the number of compulsories be reduced, and I think most people in our organization would favour that route. I do not want to see the number of compulsories increased, to be quite frank. I guess it was more or less a feeling of the climate of the day, perhaps a misreading of it, that the only way we can seem to gain exposure is through compulsories. Back in the 1970s when there were relatively fewer compulsory courses, I think it was a caveat emptor situation.

I do not think students were disadvantaged. Many of these young people have gone through the system. I have worked with several of them as teachers. They had a broader choice of courses than I had when I went to high school and personally, I think they were better for it. There were things they did not take which I did.

Perhaps I was dismayed by that but, on the other hand, they knew other things I did not.

I know you have heard from other people and I can well imagine exactly what they said. I know you would face 50 or 60 compulsory credits and that is ridiculous.

My feeling is that if we take a look at the outcomes we expect and put the responsibility on all of us to try to deliver those, then I do not think it make a great deal of difference whether you learn logic through taking accounting, through mathematics, through technical drawing or how you learn it. It is the broader concepts I think you want to teach. You are quite right by catching us on that, shall we say, paradox we had in there. Our first recommendation was to reduce the number of compulsories; give kids more choice.

Mr. Keyes: When you say reduce them, were you thinking of the number of compulsory credits or total number of credits? I was not quite sure because when you say reduce compulsory, you might also be saying reduce the total number from 30 to a lower number. It could be two areas. I just want to clarify which, because it used to be less than 30.

Mr. Dodd: Exactly. What we were talking about in this particular recommendation was the reduction of the number of compulsory courses.

Mr. Keyes: But leaving the number, I take it from what you are now saying, as it is.

Mr. Dodd: We did not address this, to be quite frank, in our written submission. We noticed under OSIS that what seemed to happen was that students who had difficulty in getting through school under 27 credits were now faced with 30 credits and students who had very little difficulty in achieving 33 credits now only had to achieve 30. There seemed to be a great deal of irony in that. I do not know why you would think we would be in favour of the reduction of the number of credits also for some kids. Once again, you are going back to a two-level diploma, to the things that we had before.

Mr. Keyes: I do not know whether Gordon wants to comment on that overall issue, but the other one would be looking at the streaming aspect. You seem to still support streaming in a sense, yet you have talked about the days of the open courses. Perhaps you have not come down to say whether there is room for both because once again you would find the debate between subject and teachers: "If I can create a business education course that's open and challenging, why can't the math or history teacher? Why is it set at three levels?"

And to go back into the question as to when, perhaps, the streaming should take place, you have not touched on that, but we are getting a lot of presentations—as far as my observation goes, maybe because it is the bent I was in when I started the committee—that any thought of streamed curriculum should not occur until probably the end of grade 10, beginning of grade 11, that it should be much more general as far as course content is concerned through 9 and 10.

Mr. Jeffrey: I think in the majority of cases, most of us in the business studies area were forced into—it was dictated that our courses would be open level. From an administrative standpoint, it was a timetabling or a scheduling situation. I know in my board that is the way it went: "All technical subjects shall be open level." As a result, we were getting that broad spectrum of student.

I think it is a little too early for us now, because we have to have the three levels, and there are a lot of things we have to adapt and adjust to in our teaching and expectations of these students, because we now have them in the general-level courses or in the advanced-level courses, whereas before, they were all together. There is a lot of retraining and in-service training to be done on teachers so that they can come to grips with what it is these students are capable of, particularly at the general level. That is the difficulty, as I see it. We need a bit more time to meet whatever those needs are, because for years they had been all part of the milieu, so to speak. Have I answered your question?

Mr. Keyes: It does not quite answer it. I wonder if you feel that, because the students are just coming into the high school environment, it would be better if they had a bit longer time before you attempted to have them make the choices about the level at which they choose to take the business programs.

Mr. Jeffrey: I would say no. I think they are ready.

Mr. Keyes: You think students in grade 8 are quite competent to decide whether they are going to take basic or general or advanced level of a particular business subject, even though they have never had any experience with it?

Mr. Jeffrey: Assuming that there has been adequate counselling along the way, yes. We are relying on the elementary schools to make some kind of suggestions as to what routes those students should take.

Mr. Keyes: I do not want to defend the argument, but it is very difficult—and I spent 37

years doing it–to try to convince students in grade 8 the best level they should be taking business math or other business practices at is basic, general or advanced level, because you are going to be making it on the basis of what you have measured their overall, general academic abilities to be and, hence, may suggest something that is, to me, somewhat inappropriate when they have not had a chance to experience some of that opportunity. Therefore, my tendency is to want to delay the selection process.

Mr. Dodd: Yes, I can certainly understand that. In my own experience, I think in some feeder schools there seems to be a fairly good awareness of what the high school program is and how it would match the student's abilities; in others, perhaps there is not. Also, we mention in here that we certainly are in favour of more counselling. I think this is important. Once again, I think probably the elementary school is very competent at assessing what level these students can learn at.

Mr. Jeffrey: I should add that the traditional business subjects offered at the grade 9 level are quite limited. We would only be offering, say, the introductory keyboarding course or an introduction to business. I think you will find in most schools, they would be offering keyboarding at the advanced level and at the general level, which would give the students–it is a personal-use course. Under the old system when it was open level, you would find one group of students who were so far advanced and then the other students needed that remedial work, that extra time, which made the delivery of that subject quite difficult.

With the advanced level and the general level, I think you are going to find students at that skill probably a lot more comfortable in the general level or the advanced. In the transition, if the general level was not adequate for the student or not meeting the needs, then that student could be moved to the advanced level very easily, and vice versa, from our discipline.

Mr. Keyes: I guess not having taught keyboarding–that is the one area only I have not taught in my career–I had always felt that if one wanted to take keyboarding, I could have taken 30 students and let each one of them definitely progress at his own level. By the end of the year, some would have gone into what I would say was an advanced level of achievement and some would still be at a very basic level; that is, again, because of my lack of having taught it, as I am sure you will say very quickly. But I still believe there is so much more to the actual mechanics of, let's say, keyboarding.

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In my schools, any child who left grade 8 had basic keyboarding, because I did it myself as an extra for them on computers, that they could be accommodated and could achieve much greater levels by the end of the year. One student may end up with 25 words a minute and the next one may end up with 80 words a minute. Surely that comes from the individual's own skill, dexterity and the amount of practice he spends on it, all those other things.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am tempted to travel down the same road, but I think that would be unwise.

I do have some really major difficulties with what I consider very artificial notions of homogeneity; that is, that somehow we can have three categories now that somehow are fair to people and their expectations, when we used to have seven in other times when we streamed. All evidence on streaming seems to me to be that the longer you have streaming, the more rigid it gets, the more difficult it is to pass from one system to another and the more labelled you are in ways which are quite artificial. I will not go down that road too much, except I want to go back to the compulsory credit thing, if I could, because I have some real difficulty with this.

When we look at the goals of education as they are listed, one of them is physical wellbeing–I have forgotten the rest of the line on it–yet we require only one credit in physical education in the entire high school level.

The music people have come before us and have said, very well, I think, that the role of music in our education system has really diminished and that music and its importance to our culture is therefore being diminished as well, in spite of all sorts of other cultural trends about music.

The tech teachers are coming to us suggesting increases and you are suggesting increases. The whole trend towards bilingual education is there. The Catholic schools are saying they want more religious basic credits. Basically, one has to question how we can do that. We are going to end up with 30 compulsory credits, and I am not sure it does not point up a problem with the way we are looking at compulsory credits. Maybe that is what you wanted us to do in terms of your first part about trying to get a reduction in those numbers so that people can move to more options and then doing your teaching across the curriculum in terms of language, etc.

If that is the point you are making, and I accept the notion, if it is to put up compulsory credits in business against maybe yearly compulsory credits in physical education or some kind of health education, I would have difficulty with that. I wonder if you would respond.

Mr. Jeffrey: Your notion is correct.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is why you are pushing us.

Mr. Jeffrey: Exactly.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I consider it duly noted. I do not know what the heck we are going to do with it in the end, because we also have another whole group of people who are saying that the 16 core subjects are not sufficient core, and that leaves us in the other end of the problem. I wish we had more pedagogical information to reinforce one position or another. We have not been getting much of that in terms of studies or anything we can use.

Mr. Jeffrey: I am sorry, we cannot help you.

The Acting Chairman: Gentlemen, thank you very much for your presentation and for being with us this afternoon.

Mr. Jeffrey: Thank you.

The Acting Chairman: Our next presentation is by the Metropolitan Separate School Board. Will their representatives would come forward, please.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: Good afternoon. We will get ourselves sorted out here, I think.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you for being with us this afternoon. We have slated one hour for your presentation. I just might have you identify yourselves for electronic Hansard before you begin, please.

METROPOLITAN SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mrs. DiGiovanni: Certainly. My name is Caroline DiGiovanni. I am chair of the Metropolitan Separate School Board. On my left is Norm Forma, who is deputy director of education for program design for our board; on my right is Dr. Anthony Barone, director of education, Metropolitan Separate School Board; and on my far right is Jack McCabe, deputy director, field services.

Thank you for having us in a little bit early. We appreciate that and we also are very appreciative of the opportunity to speak with this committee. It is not my intention to read the same submission which we forwarded to you, but I will highlight some of the important facts and share a few concepts that our board will explore in more depth.

The Metropolitan Separate School Board offers a diverse program for more than 104,000 students and the excellence of our Catholic education program is found in 190 elementary and 35 secondary schools. Metropolitan Toronto is a unique city, and to provide education to young people in our multicultural and multiracial community is most exciting.

We believe it is necessary continually to assess our objectives and procedures, ensuring that students receive the assistance and skills necessary to begin the transition from school to work.

The work of this committee, your committee, will require an extensive and critical review of the issues of OSIS, semestering, streaming and grade promotion. Input in these matters must be sought from a wide and varied source of expertise, including parents and students and those representing the social, educational, business and technological sectors of the community.

We trust your work will continue and that before quick resolutions are proposed, we will have an opportunity to study the impact on facilities, program development, staff in-service, availability of staff, use of available community resources and, most important, on the funding of all schools in Ontario with our partners in education.

The issues you have chosen to address are complex and have been dealt with over the past 20 years, from the 1968 Hall-Dennis report, Living and Learning, to the most recent report of Mr. Radwanski, Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts. It is our intention to continue this discussion and explore these questions and alternatives with the many constituencies that make up the Metropolitan Separate School Board.

On OSIS, the first issue, it is recognized as the Ministry of Education circular that describes for secondary schools the program and diploma requirements for awarding of the Ontario secondary school diploma and the certificate of education.

The Metropolitan Separate School Board supports the overall thrust of OSIS and believes a complete reorganization is not warranted at this time. OSIS is only four years old and has barely completed one cycle. It is our understanding that circular documents are usually reviewed every five years. OSIS should be reviewed in the regular manner commencing in 1989, with revisions occurring in the following years. The full cycle of implementation has not been

realized and, thus, a true evaluation of its strength is difficult.

In our document, we identify the sections of OSIS that we regard as beneficial. For the record of Hansard, I will read the titles of the sections we find helpful: The Guidance Program, Special Education Programs and Services, Multiculturalism, Courses of Study at the School, School Course Calendars, Community-Related Packages, Co-operative Education and the sections describing Alternative Education Program, Attendance and Code of Student Behaviour.

There are, however, sections of OSIS that do require revision. Let me begin with references to section 4.10, diploma requirements. We recognize that employers value high school diplomas. They use diplomas as a standard or benchmark to screen future employees. OSIS is specific with its prescription to achieve a diploma, and some would suggest that this section is very demanding and not at all forgiving, especially for students of lesser ability.

The rigidity of this section may be an incentive for some students to drop out. It is logical to believe that the longer it takes students to acquire the credits necessary for graduation, the greater likelihood there is to increase the number of students who will consider leaving school. Under the previous program, HS1, students required 27 credits to earn their Ontario secondary school graduation diploma. Under OSIS, they are expected to accumulate 30 credits. This is usually completed in the space of four to five years. Exploring the establishment of a common school-directed program at grades 9 and 10 with a credit system only at the senior division would appear to be appropriate.

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We believe a common core program would provide opportunities to master skills identified as essential in a holistic approach to education. By creating a common core, skills could be achieved through a variety of pedagogical approaches ranging from the traditional subject divisions to a thematic approach to learning. Within this exploration, a review of the skills and content guidelines for grades 7 through 10 would be necessary. Students and their parents must be cognizant of all the requirements appropriate to identify a successful student.

Until 1967, home-room settings were the feature of secondary schools. The introduction of HS1 changed this opportunity for students to establish a peer identity through this format of class organization. These interpersonal relationships with peers were developed when students remained grouped as a class, studied English, art and mathematics with the same partners and only the teachers moved from group to group.

As a result of OSIS, it is unlikely that students would remain with the same peer group throughout the day. Students have an individual schedule and the peer group is sent off in different directions. Thus, the opportunity to develop long-term student relationships becomes more difficult.

The next major difficulty posed by OSIS is the elimination of open-level courses. Section 4.6, level of difficulty, states, "Open-level courses shall no longer be offered." Our board has serious difficulties with this absolute statement. We believe it would be beneficial for students with varying abilities and success patterns to work together. It is quite feasible to offer open-level courses in many areas. Guidelines and curriculum can be prepared in an open-level manner, meeting the abilities and needs for the full range of students.

Catholic education espouses the ideal of the formation of the whole person. Students must continue to develop in the areas of religious education, the arts, business and technology. Increasing the number of compulsory credits would seem to have a negative impact on these studies. There is a danger that to focus only on the basics will deny students the opportunity to expand their educational horizons.

If changes were made to this section–4.10, diploma requirements–other sections would also require amendments. Two examples of sections that would need attention are 4.12, certificate of education, and 4.14, student records and the Ontario student transcript.

The present provisions in section 3.4, the instructional program in grades 7 and 8, may lead to a fragmented and disjointed program. OSIS mandates minimum hours of instruction required in subject areas instead of identifying skill levels. While subject or study areas are important, we certainly believe the acquisition of skills is of greater significance. An integrated approach to curriculum instruction across subject areas may prove to be more effective as an approach to acquiring skills.

The revisions introduced by OSIS incorporated in courses of study the facets of values, life skills, guidance, sex equity and multiculturalism. The Metropolitan Separate School Board believes it is a natural outcome of this philosophy to include two credits for religious education in the senior division. The board considers it essential to provide a credit for religious educa-

tion in each academic year of a student's program in every Catholic secondary school. Its absence is a serious anomaly in light of the amendments to the Education Act brought about by Bill 30 and the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada made in June 1987.

Our school board is supportive of co-operative education programs, recognizing that OSIS affords the opportunity for credit recognition and that these programs meet the needs of students enabling them to be exposed to their workplace. We would, however, suggest that it would be helpful to have an expanded career access program involving the school personnel in a monitoring activity, assisting students during their transition from school to the workplace.

The inclusion of section 7.2, evaluation of student achievement, recognizes the measurement of outcomes as necessary to ensure some form of accountability. Reporting to students and parents is very important. There are various formats that can be used to report effectively. However, greater accountability does not suggest the establishment of provincial testing programs linked to student promotion.

I am aware that the committee recognizes that extensive preparation is required by teachers to deal with multigrade and multilevel classes. The increased number of new curriculum guidelines is also putting a strain on school resources. We therefore think that there is a need to increase the resources available for training, retraining and the professional development of teachers.

There is also a lack of sufficient resources for the preparation of curriculum guidelines and assessment procedures for French-language programs. Guidelines and assessment procedures must be developed in a manner that is consistent with Ministry of Education philosophy but also recognizes the uniqueness of the French culture. The translation of English documents is not sufficient. The Ministry of Education must provide for a networking system that will ensure useful exchange of the resources required in French-language programs.

Semestering: As we discuss the next issue, semestering, I recognize that you are aware of its historical development within Ontario secondary education. Eighty per cent of our Catholic secondary schools are organized in this manner. We find it beneficial to have a longer instructional period. It is helpful to double entry points for students, granting greater flexibility in organizing and sequencing courses.

We also recognize the needs of continuing education and summer school, but no one organization system can be universally determined to provide a best fit everywhere. Our preference is to allow principals, recognizing the needs of the local school community, to determine the program organization of the school within parameters set by the Ministry of Education.

An examination of semestering naturally leads to a re-examination of the structure of the school year. It is difficult to rationalize the current 10-month school year, given our changing society, the diversity of needs in the urban community, the changing deployment of the workforce, the impact of information needs in a global society and the increased participation of women in the workforce.

The Metropolitan Separate School Board is prepared to consider the feasibility of dividing the school year into three equal parts. This would allow for holiday breaks between trimesters, provide a great number of entrance points for students and permit the possibility of differing lengths of the school day.

A reorganization of the school day and the school year would provide greater flexibility for secondary school students to participate in half-day classes and more sophisticated re-entry programs. We believe that opportunities for students to work part-time, to explore programs in the arts in more depth or to bridge their program between school and the workplace will facilitate a greater use of schools and reduce the dropout rate. It will also provide a greater opportunity for students to drop back in.

Some issues that must be examined include the relationship between school breaks and holidays such as Christmas and Easter, the availability of programs for July and August, climate control of school facilities, the contract year for teaching and support staff and the transfer points among elementary, secondary and tertiary education or transition to employment.

These suggestions should not be considered to limit the opportunities students must have to vacation with their families. If the school year calendar changed, parents and children would have a greater flexibility to select vacation time. It would also be incumbent upon schools and school systems to allow for a more flexible exit and return of students.

Changes to the present school year calendar will require co-operation from all parties to the educational enterprise. Support for changing public attitudes towards the traditional school year will be essential. It can occur only if everyone in the community has an opportunity to

participate in all phases of discussion on this subject.

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On streaming, the third issue: Streaming does not require yet another educational definition. We offer courses at the basic, general and advanced levels in our secondary schools, but believe that streaming remains problematic for a number of reasons.

Students may be restricted in future choice of action. The individuals choosing the basic-level and general-level courses are unlikely to develop the skills and knowledge which would permit them direct entry into university. It is generally perceived that there is little crossover from one level to another once the initial direction has been chosen, in spite of transition possibilities permitted by the current calendar.

Student aspirations may be minimized. Throughout their elementary school years, students become aware of the teachers' assessment of their ability. This understanding often affects their choice of secondary school program. Aspirations are further refined by informal relationships within level groupings. Rather than fostering equal opportunity for all, streaming may undermine the development of appropriate individual aspirations.

Learning may be impeded. There is a suspicion that students adapt to a comfortable learning level that produces only mediocrity. A system must be put in place which ensures that each student has the opportunity to realize his or her maximum potential. Mixing students of differing abilities in the same program may stimulate students of lesser ability without restricting the more advanced individuals. We suggest that the practice of streaming be re-evaluated.

In reconsidering the organizational dynamics of programming, we emphasize that individual student differences exist and must be addressed. The development of individualized learning programs which permit students to work according to their needs, interests and abilities is the most appropriate approach.

While procedures exist in OSIS that permit students to make the transition to programs at a higher level of difficulty, little visibility is given to this option. Students must be afforded the option to change the direction of their study. The road to post-secondary education should remain a realistic possibility for students.

I would remind the committee that the development of individualized learning programs has a number of policy and fiscal implications. Additional teacher and classroom support staff will be required, an in-service program for personnel will be needed, and without the commitment of significant additional funds from the government of Ontario and the pooling of commercial and corporate assessment, the successful implementation of new directions is unlikely.

Right now, the Metropolitan Separate School Board provides a unique opportunity to experiment with alternatives to the present system. Over the course of the next five years, seven new secondary schools will be added to our system. With the support of our communities and the assistance of the Ministry of Education, these schools could pilot many of the new directions that will further enhance learning opportunities.

In summary, the board supports the review of streaming practices and the development of more open and individualized program structures.

The final issue we will address is promotion policies and practices. The board supports government policy, which states "that every child should be granted the opportunity to develop as completely as possible in the direction of his or her talents and needs." We should support an approach that provides flexible policies and practices for principals, teachers and supervisory officers, reflecting the needs of the local community.

In our submission, you will find references to research studies on this topic. This research reveals a wide variety of apparently conflicting results as to the benefits to students of either social promotion or retention. The primary consideration and decisions for placement must meet the needs of each individual student. There are alternatives to retention and social promotion, including transitional classrooms, continuous progress on graded classes, intensive remedial instruction, individual tutoring programs and home assistance programs.

The graded school system, which originated in the mid-1800s, was a method of conveniently organizing students. It may be impractical to suggest that the system be eliminated entirely, but it should not be allowed to give a child a sense of failure for not meeting criteria according to a normative timetable. It may be appropriate to organize students in larger groupings. Removing the present grade system and replacing it with a structure that would group students by age or division should be investigated. Schools should be made to fit the students, not to the students made to fit the schools.

The motivation of students is a significant factor to be considered when policies and

practices for promotion are reviewed. Students will not learn skills or content if they are not motivated to do so. A study of teaching styles and approaches used in effective classrooms would be useful. Approaches to innovative teaching that assists students to acquire skills must be identified, then shared. School boards, given sufficient financial resources, could continue in their efforts to develop effective programs of this kind.

Excellence in education does not require the nonpromotion of students who do not meet standardized criteria. Excellence in education means having a realistic set of criteria that maximizes the development of each individual child, a range of criteria that provides focus and direction for students and teachers.

We are aware of the extensive debate that has focused on the issues of accountability and the criticisms of continuous promotion procedures in elementary schools. We understand that the establishment of a list of skills may be supported by some people in the community. It is possible to create such an all-encompassing list. The board contends, however, that skills are not necessarily achieved in a sequential order. Therefore, we must ensure that structures will not hinder or restrict the progress of student learning.

Sufficient flexibility is necessary for allowing students to gain these skills in various manners. To prescribe a definitive order for the accomplishment of skills could be detrimental to student progress. Models of various assessment techniques that recognize students' individuality and uniqueness should be available to teachers.

To conclude, we do not wish to bring closure to these four very important topics, and this inquiry must continue. As a Catholic school board, we affirm our belief in the spiritual dimension of the Catholic school. The Catholic school is committed to the development of the whole person, since in Christ, the perfect man, all human values find their fulfilment.

The mission statement of the Metropolitan Separate School Board reflects this philosophy and proclaims: "The Metropolitan Separate School Board, delegated by parents and mandated by the local Catholic community, is sent to serve all the students entrusted to its care by providing them with an education, excellent in all its aspects, in which God, His Truth, His Life and His Love are intrinsic to the entire curriculum and life of the school." The Metropolitan Separate School Board is determined to retain the freedom to organize schools and curriculum in order to impart Catholic truth and values.

We are appearing before this committee because we believe we have a responsibility to assist in the task. As I stated in my opening remarks, solutions to the problems presented by OSIS, semestering, streaming and promotion policies and practices require significant changes to government policy. Consensus needs to be developed at all levels.

To assist, I suggest that we explore further the development of a common core curriculum for students in the intermediate division; a review of the effect of the requirement of minimum amounts of instructional time for certain subject areas on integrated programming for grades 7 and 8; the removal of the three levels of difficulty, basic, general and advanced, and an opportunity to offer secondary school courses at an open level; a change in the present diploma requirements; the establishment of more formal links with the world of work through expanded career access programs; a restructuring of the present school year; and the development of effective alternatives to grade retention, to ensure skill development and enhance student motivation.

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We recommend that the select committee on education request the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) to:

Establish a provincial task force to address the proposals for change identified in this brief;

Request the Minister of Education to address the issues of pre-service and in-service training for teachers through the teacher education review project;

Request the Minister of Education to take immediate initiatives, to ensure the availability of an adequate supply of teachers for all program needs; and

Request the government of Ontario to structure its funding priorities to support more individualized programs and services in elementary and secondary schools.

The thrust of our recommendations is to reaffirm the need for school systems to provide a broad range of approaches to learning and for governments to commit the resources to support experimentation in pedagogical techniques.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views. We wish you well in your task and are prepared to answer any inquiries from the members.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for an excellent presentation. I apologize for missing the

beginning of it. I guess that is what happens when you put in such a good chairman as Mr. Miclash. I understand he not only ran the meeting on time, but he was 15 minutes early. We may have a general call from the membership to have him replace me on a far more constant basis.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It has already been done.

Madam Chairman: Anyway, I am certainly impressed with what I did hear.

Mrs. O'Neill: I certainly am interested in your brief. There are three or four things I would like to look at, if I may. I would like to go to folio 8 first. That is where you are talking about "establishing a skills and content guideline for grades 7 through 10." I wonder if you could say a little more about that, please.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: Specifically?

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes, what is lacking? We do have the OSIS document out there, which should be doing this, and I am wondering what you are suggesting it is not doing that you want here.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: Basically, we are finding that by limiting grades 7 and 8 to minimum hours of instruction, we diminish the opportunities for a more holistic approach, a more integrated approach. Perhaps Dr. Barone would like to add something to that.

Dr. Barone: I believe what is transpiring is that we are looking at the intermediate division, but many teachers do not see the intermediate division as a division. For instance, we have grades 7 and 8 at the elementary level and 9 and 10 at the secondary level. We have a totally different way of delivering programs.

Mrs. O'Neill: Have you pretty well eliminated your 7-to-10 schools then? Is that what you are saying?

Dr. Barone: Our schools are 9 to the completion of secondary. In essence, what is transpiring is really the intermediate division is not a unique division such as the primary or the senior.

Mrs. O'Neill: What you are asking for here is more consideration of that kind of organization?

Dr. Barone: Yes. In essence, what we are looking at is that grade 9 is in structure the same as grades 11, 12 and 13, that grade 9 is more in structure with the senior division and not an intermediate division on its own.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. Certificate of education has come up three or four times in our discussions. I see you have mentioned it in here, in folio 10, and that is all you have done. Do you grant the certification of education from the Metropolitan Separate School Board? How high a profile does it have? You are looking at diploma requirements and not much flexibility there.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: I will pass that to Dr. Barone.

Dr. Barone: Mr. McCabe will answer that.

Mr. McCabe: A certificate can be earned in our schools as well as any of the other schools in Ontario, of course. I believe that probably the limitation associated with it is the value of that certificate when the student presents it to the business world or the world of industry. I believe that at this stage of the game there is not too much recognition for it. I think we have a lot of concern around that.

Mrs. O'Neill: The one group that really brought it to our attention first was the Alliance for Children–Ontario. Do you use it specifically for students in special education or have you a broader use of it? Why I am asking the question is that you are such a large school board. If you are not using it, I doubt too many people are.

Mr. McCabe: It may be useful to recognize that it has been only a very short time since we have had the opportunity to offer courses at the full level and to operate as a fully fledged secondary school system. Consequently, there is not a wide variety of occasions when we offer that particular certificate. Our experience may not be as relevant as that of some of the school boards that have been working in that area for much longer than we have.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you. I will go now to folio 12. Could you say a little bit more about the expanded career access program?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: I will give that one to Mr. McCabe also. Jack, you are on the spot.

Mr. McCabe: I think the point we are trying to make in relationship to career access is that, although we are very strongly involved in the co-operative education program and feel that should be continued to be supported very strongly, career access is enough to assist those students who have much more difficulty in gaining access to the workforce and some times are not fully successful in their first opportunity. We feel it is a system whereby that same student might be in the workforce part-time, but be able to return to school and access might be rather easy for him; while at the same time, for school personnel to have the opportunity to work with that student and with industry to facilitate the opportunity is very important.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is this an alternative education strategy that you are now employing?

Mr. McCabe: Yes, as a matter of fact, it is. We have taken advantage of a federal government grant and were able to institute a career access program; but it is on a relatively limited basis and we would certainly like to expand that very much.

Mrs. O'Neill: Would these people, as you intimate, be dropped-back or drop-in people? Are these people who have left your system and have come back or are they students who are at risk, as some people describe it?

Mr. McCabe: At this stage of the game, the work we have been doing is with students who are at risk. I believe the alternative is something that everyone should be looking at as well.

Mrs. O'Neill: My final question is about your third recommendation to the minister of "adequate supply of teachers for all program needs." Have you had difficulty in program areas in this school year in hiring individuals who are qualified?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: Yes, we have. We have had a lot of difficulty recruiting. Maybe Mr. Forma can be specific about which program areas are lacking.

Mrs. O'Neill: That would be helpful, please.

Mr. Forma: We have generally had problems recruiting right across in all grade levels and in all subject areas. As you are well aware, I think, one of the points we want to make is that there is a drastic teacher shortage in the province. First and foremost, what we would like to say to you and to the government is that there should be some method in place whereby we can forecast teacher needs over a longer period of time. That is the first thing we want to mention.

We certainly are having very severe problems in getting teachers to teach French courses. That is probably the major area of our concern at the moment, but I want to stress that it is right across.

Mrs. O'Neill: Some other groups have intimated science and mathematics, but at the moment you are suggesting French.

Mr. Forma: French is a major concern.

Mrs. O'Neill: I suppose I might ask my other question. If I do not ask it, Mr. Johnston may. Is it the cost of housing and the cost of living in this large community that are partly to blame? You seem to be saying it with much more breadth than anyone else has said it to us. People are usually saying, "Well, it is hard to get a teacher here and here," but you are saying everywhere.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: That is true. It may be the Metropolitan Toronto phenomenon; it is difficult. It may also be the narrow access to the faculties of education. Perhaps that should be looked to by the ministry.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the report. I liked it. I liked the content and I liked the paper. The paper is wonderful.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: That is a good start.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have been fingering it for hours now, and it is quite an exciting, titillating experience, but we can talk about hands-on education at some other time. Perhaps I am getting a little punchy. Who knows?

At any rate, I am going to follow up on Mrs. O'Neill's point, because you are stating that more categorically than any other board that we have had before us. Is this a shortage of Catholic teachers or is this a shortage of teachers? In other words, have you been finding that you are having to hire non-Catholics when you would prefer Catholics because of this, or is this a problem that is right across the board in terms of just teacher availability?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: We do hire Catholic teachers, and you know that, but teacher availability is a problem. We have accepted all the teachers who have been declared redundant by the public boards, and even then we do not have enough. It is a severe problem. I believe Dr. Barone wants to add something.

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Dr. Barone: I believe there have been teachers who have been declared redundant; then what transpires at the secondary level is that soon after school starts there is a shortage of public school teachers. Then they are offered positions back at a public school board. If they elect to stay with us, and many do, the public boards in turn have to hire new teachers. It really is a problem not unique to our board but to all the boards, particularly in Metropolitan Toronto. I wish to emphasize—it was an excellent point—the point with regard to people not being able to access the faculties of education. It is housing also; it is very expensive in Metro Toronto.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Have you hired non-Catholic teachers this year who were not redundant teachers from the other system?

Dr. Barone: No, we have not.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I must make a comment about the difference between what is happening in Peel, not necessarily in board terms, but in terms of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association presentation we had the other day,

and your board's approach to this, which is striking. What percentage of your kids take nine years to complete the elementary panel?

Mr. Keyes: That is a question I have written down here.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: You have been working together as a committee for a while.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have just heard from the Peel public board. They told us that 20 per cent of their children are retained–that is the way they put it–some time between grades 1 and 8. That may not be an actual class retention, but it takes them nine years to complete the eight and not eight. I was shocked by the statistic. They claimed it was a norm.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: We are just consulting here. I am not aware of hard statistics like that. Perhaps Dr. Barone or Mr. McCabe is.

Dr. Barone: No. I would be shocked at that high number also. I do not have those statistics, but it would not be anywhere near 20 per cent. Perhaps Mr. McCabe knows.

Mr. McCabe: I am afraid I cannot add anything more to that. I too would not expect it to be that high.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is it an easily retrievable statistic?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: Could we get it? Yes, we could get it for you and forward it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It struck me afterwards, unfortunately after they left. You always think of your best questions after people leave, and no doubt I will think of some really good ones for you by the time you are gone. The North York Board of Education had been before us a week ago or so. They brought in some stats about what happens when a child enters grade 9 a year late and the likelihood of his being streamed lower and dropping out, and that kind of thing has increased.

It struck me that their policy was fact the opposite of what Peel was saying, and if I had thought about it at the time I would have asked them, but I would be very interested to hear from a large board like yours what your stats are. Because you are also a growing board and theirs is a growing board, it would be very interesting to see that. Can you tell me what percentage of your high school kids now are in basic courses?

Mr. McCabe: Again, I will have to qualify this to begin with, because we have none of our students in basic-level courses or programs as such. We have students who are taking the majority of their courses at that level, and that it is true of each of the three, but they are not necessarily restricted at that level. If you look at in that way, about five per cent of our students are taking the majority of their courses at the basic level. If you would like the statistics on the remainder of that, about 25 per cent of them are studying most of their courses at the general level. The remainder, of course, is the 70 per cent who are studying most of their courses at the advanced level.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is still quite a different profile to the public system's at this point, but it is evolving to larger numbers in the basic and the general.

Mr. McCabe: I think that is a very important point to make. I know you are aware of our history, and those increased numbers at both the general and basic levels represent a very substantial change over the very recent history of our board.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: When you say five per cent of the majority, are there students who are entirely in the basic stream, in the sense of having no general courses or advanced courses. If so, can you give us that stat at some point?

Mr. McCabe: I feel there is probably no doubt that this is the case. As to how readily available that information is, we could certainly make every attempt to try to get it for you. It would be more difficult.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I realize that is difficult, especially given the philosophical premises you are working on, which I appreciate very much, by the way.

You have made no comment in here, unless I missed it, and I am getting a little blurry here, about four compulsory religious credits, which is something we have heard about elsewhere. Was it there? Did I miss it?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: We did make reference to it. We identified that we need two more to make four. We have two already and we have asked for consideration of that. It is important.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Can you talk to us a little about the difficulty that then presents itself around the numbers of options that are available to a student, especially if a student is taking French, trying to get five compulsory French? This issue was raised with us in Ottawa where they have many schools where kids are taking that intensive French option and, therefore, find themselves really reduced in terms of what their options are.

We have had people coming to us saying we should be getting more health or phys ed

compulsories because we have only the one now. We have the arts community saying it is wrong to have only one arts. We have business coming in saying we should be having more business; we had both business and tech today saying we need more compulsories. Then, of course, we have your system basically saying, "And add two religious compulsories." We do not know how to deal with all of those, frankly.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: If you take our suggestion for the open program for a couple of years, that does something to adjust the kinds of options students can be exposed to. Further, we ask the students to take a religious ed program every year anyway. We would just like them to have a full credit for it rather than a half credit. It is part of going to our schools. It would not be a drastic change; there would just be more motivation and more ability for the students to excel. Also, there may be some good suggestions for working on a timetable.

Dr. Barone: I might add that we also offer religious education at the elementary level where there is no credit; yet we offer a full program as public school boards do. Given the opportunity, I think we could certainly accommodate to it. I am not sure if Mr. McCabe has anything to add.

Mr. McCabe: No. I have nothing.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will just go to my last question, which is my largest question, which you do not deal with. In looking at the successful education system we have, and your own, which has done some very innovative work in terms of integration policies and that kind of thing, the greatest failure of a general public education system has been its failure to deal with kids from lower socioeconomic levels, in my view, and the native community, one or two specific ethnic communities and our French population over the years.

I realize that boards like your own have not been dealing with basic-level kids that much and many of them have moved on to the public system in the past. We seem to be doing not badly with our advanced-level students and there is an argument about how well we are doing with our general-level students at the moment. There is little doubt that kids from lower socioeconomic levels have been streamed inordinately towards basic programming in the past. Their educational outcomes are much lower than the provincial averages.

How can we change that fact? If you look at the general improvements in the educational system over the last 30 years, that is the one thing that stands out as consistently being a failure. How do we change the organization of schools specifically? I am interested in trying to convince the committee to change the goals as well, to put in some social goals for education, not just individual goals. How do you change the organization of schools and the mandate of money to boards and your role in the community to change that?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: Madam Chairman, do we have an hour to answer?

Madam Chairman: You do have an hour, but that was for your entire presentation. So perhaps you could skim over the surface.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: It is a big and very challenging question, and I really appreciate its coming our way. Student populations begin in elementary schools and any students who arrive at secondary have to start somewhere; so I believe it is a systematic approach we are looking at. I just want to begin by offering this to the committee. Dr. Barone is the director of our school board now. He started out as a student. He has been a teacher. He is really a product of our school system. He began at St. Anthony right downtown.

Dr. Barone: I began in the lower socioeconomic area.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Although most of your population does not. Even your immigrant population has not been at the lowest socioeconomic levels. It has been slightly above that. It is important to notice that.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: I think it is an important social responsibility of the school board, particularly one of our size and dimension, and it can be approached in a variety of ways, but it does begin, I believe, at the elementary level and the attitudes and approaches taken then, at the entry points. In order to allow full development of the students, our emphasis, consistently in our paper and in our system, is on individual development. It is really important to keep that in mind.

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Teachers have to be prepared for that, and if they are not prepared when they are learning to be teachers, then it is our job to help prepare them for that. There have to be strategies for dealing with individual students, their abilities and their differences. We object to the kind of testing that is culturally biased because we have so many students who are new. Any testing program has to be delayed until they are acculturated to a certain extent. I think we have a system that is aware of these things. How to address them takes a lot of creativity and a great deal of discussion.

Dr. Barone: If I might comment and, if I am allowed to, take a different point of view, I really do not believe we are discriminating against the lower socioeconomic levels. As a school system, both our board and the Metropolitan Toronto School Board have special programs. We have special needs schools; they have their inner-city schools. We try to address by budget and pupil-teacher ratio in particular cases these types of situations.

I believe Mrs. DiGiovanni has mentioned our testing, if you want to call it that. I do not like to use the word "testing" because I think it is more assessment. I do not think testing is necessarily to pass but to diagnose certain problems that perhaps could be addressed. I feel we are really addressing a lot of the issues.

I think our board—and I would speak for the public school board if it would let me—is doing a good job. I think we can do a better job. There is no question about it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Statistical evidence certainly does not show that for the public board, that it is making any difference, frankly. I do not think your board has done any studies, have you?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: No.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: To follow any sort of socioeconomic analysis of outcome?

Mr. Forma: We are in the process of doing some studies in that area, longitudinal studies. There is no question about that. Just to add a bit to what the chairman and Dr. Barone have said, many segments of this brief really address the kind of issue you are concerned with.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I agree.

Mr. Forma: The whole focus on the creation of an intermediate division which is substantially different from what now exists is one area. I think the chairman also stressed very strongly the need to relook at the whole issue of teacher training and specifically teacher retraining, because we can have all the philosophy in the world but unless people are prepared to implement that properly, we are not going to do it. There are a number of areas we should be looking at, and they are dealt with in this brief. Open programming is another area.

The other key point I want to make is that in addition to the numerous suggestions we have made here that would lead specifically to the question you asked, we are further suggesting that there needs to be far more time to explore this and to explore it with all the constituent groups. This committee should not end its deliberations a week or two weeks from now, but rather it should be making some suggestions that will allow for that mechanism and process to take place.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am sure that will be the case. We just have to decide how to limit ourselves in what we are going to deal with rather than thinking we can sum it all up at this stage.

Madam Chairman: We have Mr. McLean, Mr. Cordiano and Mr. Leone. Mr. Cordiano, I thought you just left. Somebody left. There is an empty chair there.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Some times it is hard to tell.

Madam Chairman: I will not compound my mistake by saying everybody looks alike. We do have an extensive list and we have about 10 minutes left. In true keeping with my style, we will be going overtime on this presentation, no doubt. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: I will pass.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for trying to assist me to resurrect my reputation. Mr. Cordiano.

Mr. Cordiano: I was going to pursue the line of discussion, but I want to get into more details. I am just a substitute on this committee and I have not been here very long. One of the things I have been concerned about—and Mr. Johnston has elaborated on it a little more—is the reference to a particular group in the inner city in Toronto. I grew up in the inner city, like yourself, Dr. Barone. I did not go, however, to a separate school during that time; I was in the public school system.

Looking at what is happening within the Portuguese community in particular, it is a very interesting situation. I do not profess to know much about it, but certainly in talking to parents and people who are interested in that whole area, I am finding there are tremendous problems within that community. If you were to look at their standing in a socioeconomic sense, they would not be that low in terms of income levels; yet they are having difficulties with the educational system.

Obviously, that is something you are aware of. I am wondering what you are doing with regard to that, to further look at that group within the inner city, because it is a pretty large problem, a problem I think we have not really been dwelling on. I wonder from your perspective, because there are a large number of people from that community who attend separate schools, what the feeling is right now. What is your thinking on that particular group?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: We certainly are quite aware of their presence in our system. We have community liaison people who can help them and we are attentive to changing and adapting as the population requires. I think we are extremely aware of the need for contact between the school and the family and doing everything we can to ensure that contact takes place. With any group, it is a matter of reaching out from our side and helping it come into the school. At times, that takes some doing, because you are overcoming a lot of cultural barriers, but once the invitation has been made and the community has responded and links are established, then a lot of progress can come out of it.

We had a very large community day for Portuguese parents two years ago. It was so successful that they have continued it. They have formed an association. Really, the links are becoming quite visible, and we are happy to support that sort of thing. In the classroom, it is imperative to have teachers who are informed about the cultural needs of that community and sensitive to them. I believe Mr. Forma wants to add something.

Mr. Forma: I guess every cultural group is different and has its unique features. We have spent a lot of time as a board focusing on multiculturalism and the multiracial makeup of the city. In fact, this board has a very strong policy in place to deal with that and spends an awful lot of time in-servicing people in that area.

As far as our Portuguese community is concerned, as the chairman has said, this community forms a very large part of our client group. We have made very strong connections with this community. The board has established contact with a Portuguese parents' advisory committee and is meeting with this group on a regular basis to discuss issues with it, to find out what its expectations of the school system are. I think we truly believe in the fact that we cannot do it alone and we have to do this together. That is what we are attempting to do.

Mr. Cordiano: That was my next point. I was going to ask, is it fair of us as a society, at this point, when you do have these kinds of problems, to expect that you should solve them as a school board focusing solely on what you do? Is there anything you have identified that can be done in addition to what you are doing and outside groups are doing that can play a role on top of what you are doing? I think this problem extends beyond just what you can do, but I do not think anybody has clearly identified what the problems are.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: I think it is any practical citizen's opportunity to say what he wants to say. Certainly, translation services in all government agencies are very important. You meet your client group where it is. Information centres are located where they can be reached. Outreach to the women of this particular community or other communities where the women go to work in rather closed shops is important, because they are often the last ones to learn the language and that is their ticket to becoming part of the broader society. Continuing the English classes and citizenship classes is very important. We make our schools available. I know there are plenty of opportunities in the public school buildings, too, so that it is in their neighbourhood that they can learn these things and the upgrading of their skills.

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Certainly, there is a responsibility on the part of the whole network of social agencies and government agencies to meet the incoming groups. In that way, we will have a productive population.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: As somebody said today, the school is the one stable institution in the society at this point. It is there. It is in the community, on a small neighbourhood basis often. I am wondering if we do not have to redefine. It is already evolving a changing role. Would it not be good to redefine the goals for the school as the unit which maybe co-ordinates a lot of this? The kids of a system are seen for 13 years or so by a school system and they are not seen by any other agency in society in the same way. I am wondering if there is a focal point for the co-ordination of these kinds of things, if we need to do more to maximize the role of the school.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: We look upon our schools as centres of that kind. We cannot run all those programs, though.

Mr. Cordiano: That is just it.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: The programs have to be run and funded by the agencies that want to do them, but I think we are making room available.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Or your goals can be changed.

Mr. McCabe: I think one of the areas where we are making substantial moves in that direction already, and would like to increase them, is in the area of day care. As space becomes available which, obviously, you realize, is not one of the luxuries we enjoy at this point, but as that occurs, we are very anxious to extend that kind of a social responsibility in that area.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I know that is not the whole story.

Mr. McCabe: However, funding is absolutely essential.

Mr. Cordiano: Of course it is always essential.

Mr. McCabe: But even more so–

Mr. Cordiano: And how to find more of it is even more essential, especially for us.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: We get a chance to put this particular oar in the water, that we run our system at about $1,000 less per pupil than the public boards have to spend.

Mr. Cordiano: You do not need to tell me. I hear it from my wife every day.

Mr. DiGiovanni: We raise that issue just to put it on the record.

Mr. Cordiano: Just one final thing. You do not have any statistics on this, so there is no point in my asking you to further detail what is happening, but I think you really have to do some studies on your own and find out where these kids are ending up. Most of them, as Mr. Johnston pointed out, used to attend the public high schools, going from a separate elementary panel to the secondary panel at the public school level in the public schools. Therefore, you probably do not have those kinds of statistics, but I think you have to start gathering those statistics before we have any idea.

There certainly is a perception that there is a huge problem out there. These kids are just not going on to university, etc. Their participation rate is very low by all accounts, but you know it is not the kind of data that we need to be accurate in our assessment. I am just making a pitch for you to start that as soon as possible.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: We have a couple of projects under way right now and we are very anxious to see the outcomes.

Mr. Cordiano: Okay.

Mr. Leone: I want to take the opportunity to give a personal welcome to Mrs. DiGiovanni, because she is married to my godchild–

Mr. Keyes: Conflict.

Mr. Leone: –and to all the other members. I know them very well.

I have two questions that probably also tie in with what Mr. Cordiano asked. Years ago, we had the problem of vacation at schools. We had many hard battles to solve it. Then we had streaming. I would like to know from you the effect of streaming on children of immigrant families and families where the mother tongue is not English. This might also answer some of the questions Mr. Cordiano asked.

As for my second question, I would like to know what the separate board has done in the field of multiculturalism, in teaching subjects which teach the culture, the lifestyle of our ethnocultural groups in Ontario, and if some of the subjects should be made compulsory, the way you make religion compulsory, and rightly so, in the separate school. Should we be promoting the teaching of subjects in multiculturalism as compulsory subjects so that we give our children a knowledge of our society? That same question will probably be of interest to the next group, but I want to ask you about streaming and multiculturalism.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: You know how broad our student population is, in that we do have many groups who enter the school without speaking English. First of all, we have to assist them in learning English. That is very important and is an ongoing task at every grade level, because they enter when they are able to enter. If it is not until grade 10, then they get English as a second language in grade 10. That is one area of receiving them.

The tracking of streams of students from the immigrant group is something we really have not done. We have not had responsibility for all the grades of high school for very long. We have never had vocational schools in our system at all. We are just now beginning to study the flow of students, where they go and what they do when they leave our system. We are short on statistics, but eager to find out more.

I think what is more germane is that in the schools themselves there is a community that supports the aspirations of the student and the family as they are expressed and does not make determinations about those students simply because of their status, whether they are newly arrived or from where they live or where they come from. It is very important to us, as a religious system, that each individual is taken for the person he or she is. We have to keep reminding those at every level who have to deal with students to approach them that way. Their particular needs and their particular cultural community should never be an impediment, but rather be part of that whole person and therefore be enhanced.

Mr. McCabe wants to add to that about streaming, I guess.

Mr. McCabe: Not on streaming, but to indicate the sensitivity of the system to the needs of immigrant children. You may not be aware of

the fact that the extended day heritage language program we offer is to as many children as would comprise many medium-sized school boards in this province. We educate children in their own language and culture in very large numbers.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Would it not be nice if all boards did that?

Mrs. DiGiovanni: To finish that, with regard to the multiculturalism teaching that goes on, those classes are not limited to students from that language group. They are open to anyone, and it is lots of fun to go on a Christmas concert and see the rainbow, things in Italian or in Portuguese.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Metropolitan Separate School Board for its presentation today. I am pleased to announce to members that we are only five minutes behind on this presentation.

Mr. Keyes: Doing well.

Mrs. DiGiovanni: Thank you very much. It has been our pleasure to come.

Madam Chairman: We are very glad you did.

Our next presentation is by the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship. As our next group is getting seated, I will read a letter for members' information. You may remember that we saw two groups from Voice for Hearing Impaired Children, one in Sudbury and one in Ottawa. We did get a letter from them expressing their appreciation. It reads:

"On behalf of our Voice parents and their children, I would like to express our appreciation to you and the members of the select committee on education for your thoughtful attention to our concerns. Adjusting your focus to a presentation that does not quite fit your committee's mandate is difficult enough, but to do so at the end of a very long day and still remain attentive is truly amazing.

"We thank you for your encouragement and understanding and wish you and your committee well in the challenging tasks ahead."

It was nice to get an accolade from Voice to the members who were present in Sudbury and Ottawa.

I think the multicultural group is just getting settled.

Good afternoon. If you do need a fifth chair for your other member, feel free to pull that one over.

Dr. Kong: No, we are four.

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Madam Chairman: You are going to go it alone. Okay. I thought I was given a list of four. Talking about literacy and numeracy, I am like Mr. Johnston. I have math anxiety; so anything over two and I get flustered.

Welcome to our committee. We have allocated a half-hour for your presentation time and we hope you will have plenty of time at the end for members' questions, because I know we have a number of members who have already indicated that they have questions ready for you. Please begin whenever you are ready. Would you just start by introducing yourself for the purpose of Hansard?

ONTARIO ADVISORY COUNCIL ON MULTICULTURALISM AND CITIZENSHIP

Dr. Kong: Thank you, Madam Chairman. We are very grateful to be here today to put our views across. I am Shiu Kong, president of the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship. With me on my left is Mary Amyotte, vice-president, and Philip Alexander. Mary, by the way, is from Peterborough, and Phil, another vice-president, is from Windsor. On the far right is Henry McErlean, who is our executive director.

To begin with, I wonder if you have received copies of our submission.

Madam Chairman: Yes, we have. It is currently before all members.

Dr. Kong: Thank you. I will just briefly outline the responsibilities of the council. The council, as you might know, is appointed by order in council and is charged with the responsibility of helping the government to formulate policies and programs pertaining to the promotion of multiculturalism in Ontario.

The second task we are charged with is that, in our own way, we promote multiculturalism across the province. In that sense, we have 60 members on the council, all appointed to represent, first of all, the regional diversity of the province, and second, the community diversity of the province. In that sense, members are not appointed to the council specifically to represent a particular geographic community or a particular ethnic community; they are appointed because they have proved to be experienced in matters of community concerns, because most of them have been volunteers to all kinds of community services for a long time.

In that sense, from the time I became president just about a year and a half ago, we have been taking the approach of changing the traditional position of being watchdogs to government programs and policies and of taking the stance of criticizing government to the stance that we find

it much more rewarding to work with government in pointing out inequities and, at the same time, in making very concrete suggestions, exerting our input where policy formations and program designs are being made.

It is within that purview that we were very glad to have been partly instrumental last year in the formulation of the new strategy for multiculturalism announced last June.

Further to that, we now get ourselves involved with all ministries, not just one ministry, in formulating work groups where we can directly input our views to whatever areas we are needed. It is in that spirit that we have undertaken to organize a small task group made up of Mary, Phil and Henry to come up with this submission to this select committee.

On that note, then, I will ask Mary to bring you the major points of that submission.

Mrs. Amyotte: With your permission, I will not read the document, since it is before most members, but I would like to refer to part of it, for example, at the end of page 2.

As we are an advisory council, we feel in advising the government it is the role of our council to reflect the needs, desires and expectations of Ontario's diverse cultural and regional communities and to encourage an environment in which all Ontarians have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, because multiculturalism is now a part of Ontario and what it means to be a Canadian.

Given the opportunity to speak to this select committee on education, we would like to zero in on multiculturalism within a school classroom setting and consider the rights of children to equity educational opportunities, where equity education is defined as multicultural and antiracist education.

For example, we question: "Do we adapt knowledge that all cultures, races, languages, beliefs and faiths are of equal value in the subjects taught within our schools? Are all our students being treated on an equal basis?"

It has been noted, for example, that there are many imbalances and inequities manifested in the schools, we suggest in three ways; I am referring to the top of page 4. We find that the curriculum of the school, the content, may be restricted to Anglo-European and North American experiences and fails to identify the global village concept in which we live. We would like to emphasize that this material fails to include equally significant experience from all parts of the world and all backgrounds of the students. We find that school policies and events may be in conflict with the students' culture and belief systems. Third, we are concerned about students' expectations; the decisions made about their schooling may be based on stereotypical assumptions and biased assessment. We have deep concerns about that.

We wish to apologize for a typing error in our second paragraph; I will draw your attention to it. We state here that knowledge, understanding and awareness of the richness of our many cultures would allow a more sensitive and critical examination of present school curricula and school practices. The typing error is in the next sentence. We meant to say that in consequence, racism and inequity could be more easily challenged and full access to programs would be more universally available.

We feel we must recognize that the people here in Ontario of all cultures, languages and beliefs all share a common experience. They contribute to our society in Ontario and to our society in Canada. We therefore feel for children that all learning events and resources that support the principle of equity education must include the following concepts: to enhance the self-image of the student; to develop in the students a pride in their own heritage, culture and beliefs; to be free of the stereotypes that would imply either inferiority or superiority; to present all racial, cultural and belief groups through a range of different experiences that really reflect the students' backgrounds.

We ask that they treat the representation of customs, lifestyles and traditions of all cultures, races, belief systems and languages in ways that explain their role value and meaning; and that they treat the language of all people with equal respect, as language is a primary expression of culture and identity.

On our next concern, which covers teacher training, I would refer to Phil.

1630

Mr. Alexander: Our council, through its networking throughout the province, is aware that there are some good initiatives as well as some ongoing programs which are supportive of the directions we are encouraging. We understand there is research under way related to streaming and its implications. We understand there are materials under current development, resource guides, that provide the kind of positive references we refer to from the backgrounds of many of the students who teachers now find in the classroom. But we do have a concern about a potential gap in the process of having these resources effectively used.

We feel that there is a lack of explicit teacher preparation for today's classroom environment, which is a reflection of the reality of multiculturalism in Ontario, a lack of preparation for effectively using the tools that are becoming available; and that lack shows up in the core or the mandatory components of teacher preparation programs in faculties of education. We think that such core programs should have parts which result in improving teacher sensitivity to the ways by which they can ensure that they are clearly communicating across cultural boundaries, which are bound to arise in a classroom with a variety of backgrounds represented.

I will paraphrase and restate the recommendations that are listed towards the end and then turn the microphone back to Dr. Kong for questions.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education take steps to ensure that mandatory components of teacher education not only sensitize future teachers to the necessity of suitable accommodation of the varying cultural backgrounds and corresponding developmental needs of students, all of which will be in some ways unique, but also prepare teachers to provide the necessary pedagogical and socio-emotional support.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education also take steps to ensure that equity educational opportunities are available to all students. Some boards are in fact doing what they can to provide that. We would like the ministry to ensure that that takes place.

In this recommendation, again I have to apologize for a typing glitch, which might have confounded the sense of the sentence, but I will read it as we intended. We recommend that the Ministry of Education encourage all school boards to develop staff selection and development criteria that require demonstrated capability of achieving these goals. We recognize that this is a problematic area in that selection and promotion are intimately related to contractual arrangements, but we do have a concern there.

We are also concerned that the sensitization of policymakers and senior administrators is something that is critical to the realization of what we are calling equity education. With the primary focus on the students and the relationship between students and teachers, we do not want to overlook the fact that parents have a duty to be aware of what is being taught to their children. We therefore recommend that mechanisms be in place to establish and maintain effective communication among the entire community, which has to act in a synergistic manner for the benefit of the students–that is the home, the school and the community in the environment of the school.

That essentially concludes the summary of our brief. I will turn the microphone back to Dr. Kong, and I think we are open to questions.

Dr. Kong: I guess to sum it all up, we are basically talking about two things in a multicultural society. The two areas are really intrinsically related to the set of educational goals developed two or three years ago. On the one hand, we are trying to develop among children a sense of self, a confidence about their own self in terms of their heritage and their own identity. The other one, based on that, would be their appreciation and their understanding of other people among themselves who may be very different from themselves.

Another area would be that if we recognize the global village context and realize the role Canada is expected to play, economically and politically, in the world community, then the knowledge taught in our present curriculum is too limited and requires change.

With respect to both areas–the teaching of the person and the teaching of knowledge–we suggest that a fundamental review must be made of the way teachers are taught and trained, and also of the way teachers are going to be retrained in the in-service context.

We will be very glad to respond to any questions that you may have.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the presentation. It is an important angle for us to get. I have a couple of factual things. What kind of role do you have with the faculties of education? Have you been having any ongoing meetings with them or anything like that?

Dr. Kong: No, we have not been meeting with the faculties of education. We intend to do that in the future.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That strikes me as a very practical and useful thing to do, because I think the points you have made are well articulated. I am not even sure they would disagree with it, but could use some assistance and direction as well.

You made an allusion to the opening religious ceremonies of schools, on which of course we now have had the ruling from the courts. What role do you play with people who have been before us around the notion of developing comparative religion courses as part of the understanding of the multicultural makeup of the society, in my view, as a replacement for some of that observation of religion in the public system and to deal with an understanding of values? Have you had any interaction with those groups

organizing around that and encouraging us to even consider them as mandatory courses as well?

Dr. Kong: A very straightforward answer is that we would very much like to play a proactive role in any of the areas you have mentioned, but I think one has to understand that the council is made up of members who are basically volunteers and who have to make a living elsewhere. Nevertheless, the council, with its 60 members, represents tremendous resources with regard to all those areas you are talking about. The way things are, we are very ready for any invitation from any particular institution or group to talk about multiculturalism and input. On our own, our budget, our staff and very makeup are so restrictive that we have not been able to exert ourselves in any of those areas.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: These groups are pretty much in the same position as you are in. It just seems to me that with the court ruling it is a good time for groups like that to be thinking of putting some pressure on the government and on committees like this to come to grips with those issues of what the role of comparable religions and belief structures is within our education system. I would encourage you, and we can even give you the names of these volunteer organizations of ecumenical groups that are out there.

Dr. Kong: Mrs. Amyotte may have something to add.

Mrs. Amyotte: Not on that particular subject, but related to it. Chairing the interfaith committee for council, three members of our council had the opportunity of meeting with the Ministry of Education on a committee there. We did dialogue with them our concern for the rights of students and the rights of parents for a multifaith approach to the opening exercises under regulation 262.

I was pleased to note, in the deputy minister's office yesterday, that he said what we said four years ago and the court said last Friday. It is good to know you are right. It is my understanding that matter will be pursued by the Ministry of Education. Hopefully, they will give us an opportunity for input at that time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That would be great. I think most of us have known that was how the Charter of Rights had to rule. The inability to deal with it and move has been problematic. There has been a real fear of backlash and that kind of thing.

The one comment in your paper that jumped out at me was your statement that you expect heritage languages to be mandatory, according to Ministry of Education directors. I think this is wonderful, and I know you are privy to more government information than I am, but it strikes me that we are still waiting for some sort of government statement on the yellow paper Mr. Conway put out a year and a half ago. The submissions on that paper have supposedly been in now since last December. I wonder what you base that on and when I can send a letter to the Board of Education for the City of Scarborough.

Dr. Kong: The minister responsible for multiculturalism (Mr. Phillips) is from Scarborough.

1640

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you have any idea when? You say that you think it will actually become mandatory for boards and you know the Scarborough amendment will be brought in. That was the minimum that I expected to see, and it has been a year and a half, as I say, since then, a little longer since Mr. Grande brought in his bill to try to put some pressure on it, and, as yet, we have seen no indication that there is going to be any government action. I am happy to see your assertion. I just want to know if it was based on your putting out the positive karma to try to make this take place, or whether this was some sort of response that you have had from the ministry lately, and, if it is, I am delighted, clearly.

Mrs. Amyotte: Mr. Johnston, I wrote that sentence because I live in expectation that this will happen. Also, we had to write this several weeks ago and we were expecting a statement from the ministry in early September but so far it has not come down. However, I do understand, as of yesterday, that it is on an agenda for a late November meeting of the ministry, and maybe we will get a more positive response at that time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will keep hoping.

Madam Chairman: Mary, it never hurts to be optimistic. Well, it rarely hurts, maybe I should say.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It often does not help.

Mr. Leone: There will be some questions, but also some comments. I have been involved in the multicultural area for the last 20 years. It has been my field, where I have spent all this time. I have to tell you that we have been asking for these recommendations for many, many years. I think I would invite you to be a little bit stronger because now in this government you have people you can count on, many people, and a new government to promote this.

Now, two things that– I do not know, if you have statistics, or if you can give me some

information. What has been done in the education of teachers about the multicultural history of people? This is something that, in the past, we found that teachers did not know the students they were teaching. And, again, to another important item, the one I asked before to the chairman of the Metropolitan Separate School Board: Do we have today textbooks which teach the contribution, the lifestyle, and the culture of the people who make up Ontario and Canada, besides the English and the French? Are you aware of this?

Dr. Kong: I will answer your second question first because it is easier. The answer is no, and sadly no. There is a little bit of what is called multicultural literature which deals with various communities and the history of their personalities or the contributions that they make to Canada, but there has been no policy, that I am aware of, nor is there substantial activity that creates comprehensive textbooks to address that problem. This is one area that we would very much like to see happen.

With regard to your first question, it is much more complicated, in a sense, but I think I can speak very authoritatively on that because I have been involved with teacher education for the past 20 years in Ontario. The fact is that not only is there no mandatory course in multiculturalism in teachers' colleges, but also in most cases there would be a happen-by-chance type of multiculturalism course. Many people have been pushing that such a course be established, and many people have been working towards encouraging the school boards to increase their in-service training activities. But I was very sad to hear, from time to time, deputy ministers or ministers of education say: "We are so inundated by all these other activities and demands on the schools that multiculturalism is the last thing that we want to concern ourselves with. That, of course, is contradictory to the fact that multiculturalism is the goal and the very centre of our society and our lifestyle. I frankly do not know how we can effectively push for this to happen. We have been doing our part communicating to the Minister of Education and the government about the importance of this element in teacher education.

Mr. Leone: Madam Chairman, if I can add something of my own opinion. Now I just said that for 20 years we have been asking this. When we speak about racism and tolerance, now we are to think that during these 20 years we have shortchanged our people, young people, from knowing about their culture and contribution of other people. I believe that in order to arrive at the society where these items of racism and we recognize everybody is equal, we must know each other and that is where education is important. I am not a member of the committee, but I think an emphasis should be placed so children, Canadian and Ontarian children, know who their classmates are, where they come from and their culture, so they can appreciate and they can understand them. At the same time the teachers have to understand those children. They have to know their culture and their lifestyle. This is just my remarks because, as I say, I am just on this committee on a temporary basis. Thank you.

Mr. Faubert: Just one short observation first and that is to Dr. Kong and it was actually in supplementary to Mr. Johnston and that relates to such recalcitrant boards as the Board of Education for the City of Scarborough, who refused to implement heritage languages. Perhaps you should take the initiative and not wait to be invited because if you wait to be invited they will never ask you, just as an observation.

The second is you seem to say in here that the success of multiculturalism lies with the school system. Is that basically what you are saying? You have a series of excellent recommendations here. Beyond that, the overall theme of this, is that your basic position?

Dr. Kong: Yes indeed, that is one of the more important recommendations because ultimately we are talking about people's attitudes and people's understanding of this society and the people in it. So we are talking about changing how people feel towards each other, towards themselves and to the larger society. It is in that sense that we feel that education in the broad sense, not just education in the schools but social education–television, media–holds the key to the success of multiculturalism.

Mr. Faubert: That was going to be my last aspect to that. I agree and I see the future success of multiculturalism coming forward within the school systems and that is where they are going to be addressed within the younger population, but how do you then address the existing population, because that is the area in which you see–and I was mentioning this to Mr. Keyes–where below the surface of that which we may say is acceptance of multiculturalism lies an incipient racism that comes up from time to time, because people have not really come to grips with it or not have been sensitized to what the process is.

Dr. Kong: First of all there is no illusion on anybody's part that we would have all that sense of racism and so on wiped out, but inasmuch as

we can we will minimize it to the bare minimum and also inasmuch as we can we will help people to understand differences in our midst. You would probably be happy to know that we have made a recommendation that the government launch a major publicity campaign on multiculturalism and basically the government has accepted. We are working towards making specific recommendations as to how that campaign can be effectively mounted. I would urge all of you to support that in the government and to ask them to vote for a substantial budget, not for the council, but for the campaign because I think when we pronounce that Ontario is a multicultural society and that multiculturalism is the goal for Ontario, the only way to show that we are serious is to let everybody know what is the meaning of the word "multiculturalism," why multiculturalism is for Canada and what there is for the average person if we become a truly multicultural society.

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Mr. Faubert: On that note and in the interests of time, thank you.

Mr. Keyes: I will only make a 30-second comment.

Madam Chairman: I hope it is not the same as Mr. Mahoney's 30-second comment yesterday.

Mr. Keyes: No, 30 seconds, and that is simply that goal you want to attain will not be done by putting a course in the high schools called "Multiculturalism" and streaming it and semestering it and all the rest of that type of thing, nor will it happen by the teachers colleges having to have a course that is entitled "Multiculturalism." It has to come from the whole innate sense that we have to get across to the new teachers going into the classrooms and the teachers who are currently there, of the whole idea of respect for individual differences within people and self-esteem that we must engender in each and every one of us. Thirty-two seconds.

Mrs. O'Neill: I just feel that we have a very excited minister at the moment in Mr. Phillips, and I feel that you have carried your message very well. I am very happy when I see 400 people you work with come to Queen's Park to celebrate, and I think it was even double that on the actual celebration day. I know you have said this message many times, but somehow or other, there are many more people being very conscious of what you are saying, and I would like to commend you for your work. Keep talking to that exciting minister.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for all those unpaid, unpolitical announcements.

I would like to thank you very much, Dr. Kong, for the work that you and your council are doing and also for your contribution to our committee today.

The select committee on education shall stand adjourned until one o'clock tomorrow afternoon when we meet in committee room 1. I would mention to the members that from one to two o'clock there will be video presentations that groups have given to us for that purpose, and we will start the regular hearings at two o'clock with Duncan Green.

The committee adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Reville, David (Riverdale NDP) for Mr. D. S. Cooke

Also taking part:
McClelland, Carman (Brampton North L)

Clerk: Mellor, Lynn

Staff:
Gardner, Dr. Robert J. L., Assistant Chief, Legislative Research Service

Witnesses:

From the Kohai Educational Centre:
Tolley, Chris
Queen, Gordon

Individual Presentations:
Cassidy, Peter
Gainey, Chris

From the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario:
Nichols, Eva, Executive Director
Ziraldo, Lynn, Chairman, Educational Policy and Legislation Committee

From the Peel Board of Education:
Palazzi, Lynda, Superintendent of Programs
McKee, Margaret, Chairman
Lee, Bob, Director of Education and Secretary

From the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations:
Starkey, Dr. John, President
Webster, Heather, Government Relations Officer

From the Ontario Association of Business Education Directors:
Jeffrey, Gordon, President
Dodd, Douglas, Past President

From the Metropolitan Separate School Board:
DiGiovanni, Caroline, Chairman
Barone, Dr. Anthony J., Director of Education
McCabe, Jack, Deputy Director of Education, Field Services
Forma, Norman, Deputy Director of Education, Program Design

From the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship:
Kong, Dr. Shiu Loon, President
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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Organization of the Education Process

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First Session, 34th Parliament
Thursday, October 6, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, October 6, 1988

The committee met at 2 p.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to start this afternoon's session of the select committee on education as we continue in our review of the organization of the education process in Ontario.

Just before we start, we do have a document that has been drafted by our research department to guide members when we start into our report-writing phase. Dr. Gardner is distributing that at the moment. If you could look at it over the weekend and then formulate your thoughts and bring them with you next Thursday when we get to the report-writing phase, we would appreciate it.

Mr. Reville: Next Thursday at 10?

Madam Chairman: Actually, next Thursday we are going to have a change in our original agenda. This morning we were supposed to have Ken Dryden, who, as you know, is the former youth commissioner. Unfortunately, he could not make it, so we have rescheduled him for next Thursday morning at 10 o'clock. Then the committee report-writing phase will follow that.

Mr. Reville: The reason I asked is that I was under the mistaken impression there were going to be some drafting discussions this morning, which clearly did not occur. I got bad advice from a colleague of mine who is now so shamefaced that he is not here even.

Madam Chairman: It has driven him away.

Mr. Beer: You had the same advice I had, but I was able to find out that was not happening.

Madam Chairman: Originally, Mr. Reville, you are very correct, we had scheduled that after Ken Dryden's presentation this morning we were supposed to have an interim discussion on the report-writing phase. However, since both Mr. Reycraft and Mr. Jackson were going to be absent, it was deemed advisable, and I think Mr. Johnston was in on this conversation, that we perhaps delay that.

Mr. Reville: Quite right. I am glad to hear this was not all a Fig Newton of someone's imagination.

Madam Chairman: No, there was a sound basis in fact, but as you know, in this life we lead, things constantly change–intentionally to confuse, I think sometimes, but that one was purely accidental.

Mr. Reville: Fair enough.

Madam Chairman: Now that we have had that lively discussion, we will go to our first presentation of today, and I think that also will be quite lively. We are very much looking forward to hearing from Duncan Green. Welcome to our committee.

Mr. Green: Thank you, Madam Chairman and members of the committee.

Madam Chairman: We are pleased to have you back before us in a slightly different capacity right now. I think you are Duncan Green, private citizen, instead of Duncan Green, major star of stage, screen and Ministry of Education. Please begin whenever you wish.

DUNCAN GREEN

Mr. Green: I thought originally I was to be back here to be had at rather than to have at, but I cannot resist the opportunity to comment very briefly on the four major themes that you have been dealing with, if you will permit me to do that, and it will be brief.

I propose to deal with OSIS by virtue of its background. I hope this is not unnecessary to the committee, but I would like to indicate what my involvement has been in that process. Second, I would like to deal with the question of streaming and levels of difficulty because I think the question of levels of difficulty has been from the beginning, and continues to be, misunderstood. It may be impossible to make it understood, but I would like to take a crack at what the intentions of the recommenders were. Third, I would like to talk briefly about grade promotion and semestering in the context of school organization. These are random thoughts, but I must confess that they have percolated for a long time.

If I could, I would take you back to May 1980, which is when I was borrowed from the Toronto Board of Education by the ministry for a year and a half to be chairman of the secondary education review project. I think you know the history of that project. By and large, it was a complicated

structure. When I first saw it, I doubted that it would work. Maybe it did not, but at any rate it generated a report.

It had four committees; it went through four stages. There was a steering committee, composed of both educators and noneducators. There was an evaluation committee, composed of both educators and noneducators. There was a reaction committee, composed completely of noneducators and there was a design committee, composed completely of educators. I do not like the word "educators," but "teacher" does not describe the respective competencies that various people brought to their roles there.

It went through, I suppose, four basic stages with the last one being the publication of the report. The first one was an explanation of how the project worked, because you had to go out and explain to everybody what these committees were for and what their tasks were and to receive input from anybody who wanted to provide it, and they did that. The second stage was the dissemination of a discussion paper in newspaper format. I used to emphasize that that was done for two reasons; first, to emphasize the ephemeral nature of the recommendations in it and, second, to provide some practical use if the recommendations turned out not to appeal to anyone.

The third stage was the committee's examination of the reaction to those discussion papers and meetings with various groups. That culminated in the fourth stage, which was the preparation of the report from the committee, which went to the minister–perhaps suitably–on October 31, 1981; at which point I turned into a pumpkin and went to the University of Toronto to be director of the school of continuing studies for the next two years. As a result, I was detached from what I call the ROSE stage. The ROSE stage was the Renewal of Secondary Education and it culminated in this document which appeared in November 1982, one year later, and was the product of an internal team in the ministry dealing with a number of outside constituencies in respect of their reactions to the recommendation of the SERP report.

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Approximately one year later, OSIS was the product of this publication and the interaction with it and it came into effect in September, 1984. There was approximately a three-year time span from the beginning of the study to the publication of this and then one additional year in order to prepare for implementation. Not everybody wanted to move even that quickly, but there is a point at which, in respect of diploma requirements, at any rate, one must fish or cut bait. I have no doubt that you have looked at the various circumstances under which people acquired diplomas in various years and it is sort of nice to get to one description rather than dealing with five or six.

In 1984 it was implemented. It was a slightly broader document than HS1. It wandered into areas of evaluation and it wandered into areas of methodology. It certainly included far more attention to special education. It incorporated guidelines for grades 7 and 8.

If I could go back a bit, commissions–and in this respect this select committee is fortunate–have difficulty considering that either kids are born in grade 9 or die in grade 8. It is very difficult to take one section of the educational process and isolate it and deal with it in isolation. The Hall-Dennis commission, when it was established, was established to review elementary schools, but took almost no time to come back and say: "We can't confine ourselves to that. We'd like the mandate expanded and we'd like more secondary representation on the commission." That occurred.

We found ourselves in a similar process in respect of looking at the secondary schools and said we would like to include the intermediate division as a whole in this which took us back into grades 7 and 8.

I suppose the biggest differences would be, first, a considerable increase in the compulsory subjects–they virtually doubled at that time–and an increase in the total number of credits required for a diploma. I should explain, perhaps, our simple thinking behind that. We felt that schools existed to put students into contact with teachers as frequently as possible, so that during that span, given the demands on the curriculum and its continual expansion, which is still going on, by the way, it appeared that one should make maximum use of those interconnecting possibilities. That accounted for the upgrading, in a sense.

We recommended a four-year program to be possible, not necessarily for all students; it is the now-you-see-it, now-you-don't grade 13 syndrome, one which I confess from a distance I had difficulty grasping. In the course of the last five years I have come to appreciate the flexibility which that accords both students and schools in terms of packaging programs together. I think it is of particular advantage to students who return, as a matter of fact, so I am not bothered by this now-you-see-it, now-you-don't syndrome so much. I think it respects the school's ability and

the student's ability to match one another's paces in a better fashion. But it is not neat and tidy to explain to the world. That is quite true.

Another major difference was the levels of difficulty. I would like to say that when I left the city of Toronto board to undertake the task at the ministry, there were in existence in our school system, coded as such, seven levels of difficulty; seven levels of difficulty with a group bucking for an eighth, like the super excellent hyper-bright. Those were not described in any particular memorandum that way, they just grew that way, given the relative autonomy of the schools to design their programs. We felt that more cohesiveness was required, particularly in terms of interpreting those to the public.

So those are some of the key differences in OSIS. The other one is that it pays a good deal more attention to special education, because simultaneous with the SERP activity, the debate around Bill 82–the special education legislation, was very hot and active, and indeed they almost emerged at the same time. So those legislated requirements were there.

These do propose considerable changes for the schools. I know we move slowly, but I would like you to recall that it was not quite 20 years ago that the public school system was asked to undertake the education of those whom we previously called trainable mentally retarded. They were excluded from the public system and operated under education authorities funded through the Ministry of Community and Social Services. So sometimes progress seems really slow and at other times the impact on a system absorbing new thrusts can be pretty dramatic.

Of the elements in OSIS, there are two I would like to talk about.

One is compulsory subjects. In your report, you are probably going to have to wrestle with that question and you have my undying sympathy. When we concluded the SERP process, there was no area of study known to man that I would not have been able to make a very valid educational case for its compulsory inclusion in the curriculum; none. The problem was keeping it within 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. So whatever decisions you arrive at are of necessity going to be, in a lot of people's eyes, relatively arbitrary.

In the middle of those, however, there is a good deal of consensus–in my view, at any rate–around two elements. After that, we start to part company a little bit. The two elements that there is consensus on are language and numbers. When I say language in this province, I mean two languages, English and French, ahead of the others, and numbers and math, which people agree on.

One would be tempted to say they agree on physical and health education, but there is still some debate about whether the schools are necessarily the appropriate agency to make the world fit. Other jurisdictions operate in a very different style. West Germany, for example, divorces a lot of that activity from schools.

The second is levels of difficulty. I spent a frustrating five years avoiding saying, and preaching to others to avoid saying, "basic-level student," "general-level student," and "advanced-level student."

That was not the intent. As the terms "basic-level course," "general-level course" and "advanced-level course" came to be applied to students so the packaging concept and the streaming concept took place in terms of students, because this is what we had done in the past. The intent, however, was to allow students, paradoxically, to work with subjects at their level of need as well as their level of competence.

I have just acquired a computer. I do not know whether the basic level of instruction that I am now enrolled in is going to be too advanced for me or not, but I know blessed well I am never going to get to, nor am I interested in getting to, computer construction, nor am I interested in programming for it at this point in time. I am content to let somebody else do the mechanics and planning for that. I am interested in applying it to work that I want to do. So I do not want to know necessarily even how that thing works, I just want it to work.

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Madam Chairman: I think you and I have a lot in common. I just want to mention that.

Mr. Green: I think I have a lot of company in the world.

If it is true in that subject area, I would not be surprised if it is true in a lot of subject areas. There are levels you want to become familiar with and other levels you are not interested in pursuing. The idealistic goal was to say, "Let us not overwhelm everyone by, for example"–and this is heresy coming from a teacher of English–"making a Shakespearean play a component of every literature or English course offered in a secondary school."

I ride on the subway a lot, and one of my games is to sort of go through that crowd and think how many people would share my enthusiasm for Macbeth, how many people would know Macbeth, who or what or where? Is it wrong that

they do not? We were looking at a balancing act there.

By the same token, that same population would be completely inadequately served by some, at any rate, of the language courses we offer, apart from English and French, in our secondary schools. They are beyond that. That was the intent, and the student presumably could pick up his program from a selection of those.

We were particularly attracted to the continually recurring theme, which is commonly enunciated, that everyone should learn to use his hands somehow, should get physically in touch with things, which equals technical subjects and, therefore, a compulsory technical subject. Paradoxically, until they were introduced here, there was no compulsory technological study course nor any compulsory business course. Both of those enrolments, however, have continued to decline, notwithstanding what we felt may have been a beneficial tariff being offered to them. It has not worked that way.

I suppose there are two or three reasons for its not being translated. One is that we may be overwhelmingly idealistic in looking at the educational system as a repository of resources that people can dip into and out of. Maybe that is not what they are looking for from it. Maybe what they are looking for is a Good Housekeeping seal of approval that says: "Done at this level. Out you go." That gets us into the process/product debate, which a previous minister, Mr. Conway, used to laugh at me about, but I think underneath he shared some of the views. One might have been an impossible idealism.

A second was certainly the organizational demands that such a flexibility puts upon a school. There are schools that have wrestled very strongly with overcoming that, and I can mention a couple, if you want. I think they are pointing the way to a different delivery system that would accommodate that need.

The third resistance, I think, comes from society's desire for convenient stereotypical labels–"You are that, so you fit here"–and there is an inability to overcome that. Ideally, the educational system should be individualized instruction all the way: "All kids are special, especially my kids. They are really special." All kids are special and a different range of needs needs to be provided individually. That is a tough thing to do in our organization, which at the same time wants to package them, I repeat.

I think we do a pretty good job of that in the very early years of school with the family grouping concept, which is not strange to boards, where they will be ungraded for the first three or four years of school. The boards will refrain from putting a grade 1, grade 2 or whatever label on people. We are really successful.

We get uncomfortable with it later on: "Just a minute, it is about time we got down to business here. Where do you fit? What do you match up to," and so on. Yet the range of abilities is just as great and the range of interests is even greater.

In respect of streaming, I think you need to be conscious about whether you are talking about streaming people or–I will use another phrase–organizing knowledge, streaming knowledge. The levels of difficulty were intended to apply to content; they were not intended to apply to students. It worked out in reverse. Our heritage is pretty strong there. All of our previous models have provided packages that labelled kids in courses and destinations, so you are jettisoning a lot. We were not ready for the kind of presumed anarchy that is presumed to have occurred in the wake of Living and Learning in 1968. My word "presumed" is very consciously used.

In respect of grade promotion, that is a really difficult question to comment on. I have commented on the early grades of schools, where they can avoid that kind of thing by family groupings. I was very uncomfortable with grade promotion as it operated in the secondary schools prior to Living and Learning. Some of you may have undertaken that–50 per cent and no failures, 55 per cent and one failure; 60 per cent and two failures. If you met those standards, you could move on to the next grade.

That was the bane of every French teacher's life, because a significant number of students failed only French but carried on to the next grade level, presumed to be able to undertake it at that level. If you did not meet those standards, you took the whole ball of wax all over again. A considerable body of research was built up to point out that this did not help things at all; so in the early 1970s, we wrestled with the question of subject promotion. Having met a standard in a subject, one proceeded to the next level. Having not met a standard, one went back and did it all over again.

We will talk about one school. Has Iroquois Falls Secondary School been mentioned to you, Madam Chairman? Have they even come down?

Madam Chairman: Actually, they have been mentioned, and I very proudly pointed out to the members that I went to Iroquois Falls high school, so I was particularly interested. It was mentioned in passing, but I do not think we have

gone extensively into exactly what is happening there, just that it is very innovative.

Mr. Green: People will tell you it is a pet of mine and it is, primarily because those people did the work themselves. They did not do it out of complete disinterest or altruism. They reached a point where they could not accommodate the requirements of OSIS with their population, which, by the way, is both English-speaking and French-speaking, as you would know, Madam Chairman. They sat down and tried to figure out what to do about this, and they really went to something like the Carnegie unit system, but they modularized their curriculum. They turned the kids loose and said, "You work at your own pace and you have access to subject teachers on need," but they really dismantled most of the formal classroom instruction.

That led to some problems and some solutions. They have been at it for about four years now and they have come up with a couple of things I think would be of interest to the committee. I really suggest, if you have the opportunity, that you ask them to send you a description of their program or that you even visit the school.

They ran into the usual growing pains, troubles, etc., but by and large, they have arrived at two or three conclusions. One is that there was a group of students for whom that much freedom was not manageable. I think they have taken that group and packaged it again. Probably most of its instruction would be taking place at a basic level. They are realistic enough that they would comment on that. But they took the chance and let them go and analysed what happened to them before they pulled in that wall.

Second, I think they have had an opportunity to hone their rewritings of curriculum and the modularization of their units in a fashion that is now probably more comfortable, both for students and staff.

Third, it has changed the role of the teacher just dramatically, so much so that one of their department heads said to me: "Remember when you were teaching, how the spare period in the day was the thing you looked forward to? Now it is the classroom class that I look forward to, because I know what is coming in that class. The rest of the day, I am not sure what is coming." The strength they get from that is that an individual teacher in a subject area—and most secondary school teachers are that way—can cover the content of the span of courses described as basic level, general level and advanced level. They have the content. It is the delivery system that becomes fascinating.

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If you let the student come to the teacher when the problem is encountered, the teacher can concentrate on that. If several students identify a common problem, then they can pull together a group. The day is free enough to do that.

It puts quite a burden on teachers. I have a lot of respect for that school and for the amount of work those people did. They have good leadership, from their board right through. The board supported them through this. I have a lot of admiration for it. To me, it is the nucleus of an organizational pattern. It maybe gets people out of the grade promotion debate, I am just not sure. It is also perhaps an answer to the semestering question. It does not require that the whole institution operate on one time line, one time model or anything else. It does accommodate individualization. I am not sure how it would transplant to a 2,000-student school. I am quite ready to say that a lot of its strength comes from the intimacy of that school. I think it has about 400 students, but it is a model.

Geraldton high school did a similar thing. You will notice these schools from the north tend to be small schools that tend to look at OSIS and say: "That is all very well for you guys to dream down there. How can I gerrymander this to meet the needs of the kids here?" Geraldton has done that with the packaging arrangement. Not very many schools have ventured on that route either. Whether it was background or so forth that inhibited people from moving in that way, I am not sure, but there are samples around the province of schools moving in imaginative organizational modes that I think put the grade promotion and the semestering question in different terms.

On semestering itself, semestering is just education's answer to the bank machine. "I want to go when I want to go. I want my money when I can get my money." The disadvantage of the bank machine is that it lets you line up outside, where you used to line up inside; so you get rained on instead of being dry. The disadvantage to semestering is that it pushes an organization that fits some subjects better than other subjects. With the modularization approach, it is possible to reconcile the two. Those are really random, but they are just ideas that have been on the top of my head a bit.

I noticed in the newspaper that Mr. Dennis was back with you the other day. I would like to underline—and I do not know what you do about it—the societal demands on the school. Our latest is acquired immune deficiency syndrome. I

cannot resist saying this. Are these compulsory grades 7 to 10, somewhere in there, the most at-risk population in the country, or is that just the population that we have a handle on and can make do what we want it to do?

I have often wondered why, for example, such a course were not a requirement before one received a university degree, a college diploma, an apprenticeship certificate or a driver's licence, for that matter. If people are really serious about epidemic things, then we have really picked an area of the population that we hope will solve it in the future and shoved our heads in the sand for the rest.

That is not uncharacteristic of our approach to social problems. People look at the educational system, kindergarten to grade 12 or 13 now, because that is the area we have a handle on. I do not remember very much going away. We let things die, but we sure do not kill them. We let them die. Latin is fading away.

Part of our inability to adjust to those new things can be reflected in a personal story. When my daughter faced the first option's choice in secondary school–this was some years ago–she came home and informed us she was going to take typing instead of Latin. My wife, who was a teacher of languages, and I, who was a teacher of history, had to walk around the block three or four times to overcome the shock.

It was probably the wisest choice she ever made and was dictated by a completely different set of circumstances from the ones under which we went to school. We did not know best at that time, but I think a lot of parents have a lot of discomfort in seeing students educated very differently from the way in which they were themselves. At the same time, they would like the school system to instil all their strengths, repair all their weaknesses and anticipate the future for each of their kids preferably, by the way, in both languages.

Sorry, Madam Chairman, that is a bit more of a lecture than I intended.

Madam Chairman: Touché. As a member who happens to have two children who are in the French immersion program for many years, I can certainly identify with that.

While the members are organizing their questions, I will ask one of my own. You were talking about streaming and the fact that when they narrowed it down to the three levels of difficulty, there were actually in existence at that time seven levels of difficulty with pressure for an eighth.

Mr. Green: There were in the city of Toronto.

Madam Chairman: In the city of Toronto and probably in other parts of the province.

Mr. Green: I think so. I would not say the pressure for eight was common and I would not even say that seven was common in other parts of the province, but there certainly were five levels of difficulty, at any rate, being dealt with.

Madam Chairman: I think it is a misconception that many people have that streaming is a new thing. I graduated 20 years ago from high school. As I said, it was Iroquois Falls, a small high school with very little in the way of options because it was small.

Mr. Mahoney: It could not have been 20 years ago.

Madam Chairman: I am afraid so. Tell me it is not so.

We had a type of streaming then. We had a 9A, who were the Latin students. We had 9B and C–

Mr. Green: They took music, too.

Madam Chairman: –who were the commercial students taking typing and commercial subjects. We had–what is after C?–D; we had D and E–it has been a long, long week–who were the shop and the home economics, depending whether one was male or female, of course. I thought of it years afterwards, that really was streaming because they taught those of who took Latin much differently than they taught the same subjects to those they taught shop. That is a very old system–just like me–20 years ago they were doing it.

Would you say that throughout Ontario's education history in the last 30 or 40 years we have probably been streaming to one degree or another?

Mr. Green: I would say probably since the 1920s. During the period when there was a common high school curriculum, which lasted to the tail-end of the last century and the early years of this one, we streamed by letting people stay or letting people go, and we did not worry too much about people going. The high school horizon was not a significant horizon. My father did not graduate from high school and my mother did not graduate from high school. They were not anomalous in their generation; indeed, they were very much in the majority.

About the 1920s, we began to look at technical education, in particular, and built special schools for that. Our own society has never really embraced the status of skilled workmen as has a society that has been closer to the guild system, for example, and where that was reared, in

Western Europe, in particular, and I suspect in Eastern Europe.

That had a form of streaming of its own. It certainly was formalized in 1964, I think, with the Robarts report, which classified the world into four-year and five-year arts and science; four-year and five-year science, technology and trades; and four-year and five-year business and commerce.

Those were parallel courses, but the enrolment patterns were interesting. In arts and science, about 80 per cent of the enrolment was in the five-year program and 20 per cent in the four-year program. In science, technology and trades as well as business and commerce, those proportions were reversed. Very few were in the five-year programs; the majority were in the four-year programs.

One of the reasons for that–and this was in pre-reorganized days–is that the development of a high school with facilities able to respond to all those program needs is a physically demanding and expensive capital expenditure.

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We were assisted in 1958 with the vocational thrust in training. That is when most of the vocational facilities in the province were first built. All the schools along the subway here in Toronto, for example, were acquired under that plan at that time: Castle Frank, West Park, Parkview, Lakeview and so forth.

I would say, yes, there has been streaming and we will continue to stream. Society will stream. We can wriggle around in the schools all we want to avoid those labels, but when they go out there, they will stream.

Madam Chairman: We have heard a lot of comments to this committee, though, that they do not have a problem with having the levels of difficulty but it is coming too soon. When children go into grade 9 it is a very unsettled time of their life and the adjustment from elementary school to secondary is a major one and they need more core subjects, a home room teacher, the whole setup that they should be together, rather than streaming. Do you want to just comment on that?

Mr. Green:I recognize that. One of the prices you pay for a lot of freedom and choice in the curriculum is less ability, given your organizational structures, to group people homogeneously. With a very uniform curriculum, there is no problem putting together packages of people who stay together all day, who get to know one another all day and so forth and so on. That is both a good and a bad thing. Anyone who has taught will know that you really liked grade 10C coming in, but you could not stand that crew in 10F, G or H. "Do you have 10H?" "Oh, gee." Everyone in that class acquired that label; so there are pluses and minuses.

I do agree, however, that it is more comfortable for that. We felt, curiously, in the OSIS model that with the increase in compulsory subjects, it would be possible to organize that way. However, that negates a little bit the possibility of taking different subjects at different levels of difficulty; that is quite true.

That is why in the Cochrane model and in Florida–I do not advocate Florida as the answer to the world's problems because it did the reverse, but Cochrane did go down there–they have assigned a teacher adviser to students. Each teacher in that school has 15 students for whom he is responsible. That means getting in touch with parents, I think a minimum of every six weeks, just to chat back and forth between report cards. That was the teacher to whom the student came if there were problems and so forth.

Mr. Beer: This is in Cochrane?

Mr. Green: Yes. The last time I was up there, they said the interesting that has developed there is that teachers have very often become ombudsmen for the kids whom they advise with the administration of the school or with other people in the school. That possibly can alleviate the alienation that is associated with less homogeneity. Florida legislated it–not, I think, a wise thing to do.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Because Mr. Johnston is not here to make his daily request of the ministry people, maybe we could ask them if they could obtain information on the model they are using in Cochrane and Iroquois Falls that Mr. Green has been referring to. Thank you.

We now have a nice long list of questioners.

Mr. Adams: Mr. Green, thank you very much. I found what you had to say very interesting. I am a substitute member on this committee. I have been on it for quite a few days, but I am a substitute and you should know that. Some of the things you said were particularly **interesting for me.**

I want to pick up a couple of things you have said. One thing you said was that it is not possible to isolate sections of the system, and I understand exactly what you are saying. You also said that we tend to load up the school system, primary and secondary education, with those sorts of things.

It seems to me that one thing the secondary system has brought on itself and has kept to itself is high school graduation. In this province, the only way you can graduate from high school is in high school. I know it sounds a bit funny, but as you know the review of the colleges is coming up. You cannot graduate from high school in college. Students for one reason or another move out of the secondary system, which has been given this enormous amount of attention in these recent years, as you have described. I have had them come back to it in one way or another and I know the system is geared for that, but these students have left it or go to college and never graduate from high school. I wondered if you had any thoughts about that as to whether it should be possible to pursue some of these secondary things in other institutions?

Interjection: Gain recognition for.

Mr. Adams: Formally I mean. Yes, informally it is being done, I understand, but to actually get the standard, as you said, or whatever.

Mr. Green: My answer would be yes it should be possible. You will be into a major jurisdictional battle in respect to various unions or organizations.

Mr. Adams: It is an example, though, of the schools loading themselves up with something, rather than the other way around.

Mr. Green: I do not know I would put it that way so much. I suppose they have a natural tendency to regard themselves as the logical place to acquire this. I would point out there are a couple of other routes. You are quite right in that the school system does do this in many of its continuing education programs, and the independent learning centre for the ministry which provides a resource for some 100,000 courses or so, at least individual registrations. A number of people find that route. But you are right that they cannot find it out in a community college, which cannot give secondary credits, nor will the universities recognize the college credits. The reciprocity would be a negotiating process. I do not see a problem with that, provided there is equal interchange of personnel and so forth.

Mr. Adams: I know about the jurisdictional battle. That is partly why I asked you. Do you think it is worth engaging in that? That is why I put it to you. Do you see it as a serious problem?

Mr. Green: I see it as a problem to which there are interesting dimensions. I was asked on one occasion to go to the University of Toronto, which was contemplating abandoning its transitional year program. The transitional year program was a program established for students, most of whom were Third World students and who were prepared in rudimentary fashion, if you want to, by the university standards for post-secondary study. What they were offering fundamentally was the equivalent of a secondary school graduation diploma or a pre-university year. This was the year that was offered here.

I was asked by that committee, because the university found this an expensive proposition and would really have liked somebody else to pick it up, whether the secondary school system in Toronto could do that and I said there was no problem at all. We could do everything but one thing. We could not give them a University of Toronto jacket. That was the milieu they wanted to be identified with. They did not want to be identified with the secondary school milieu, for the most part because they were older.

I do not dispute the desirability of reciprocal arrangements in that fashion.

Mr. Reville: I do not really have a lot of questions, partially because whenever I listen to Mr. Green speak, I always believe exactly what he says. It all makes a lot of sense to me until my colleague says: "Pssst! Wait a minute". Basically, I just want to deliver myself of some nostalgia. I believe by some mischance I happened to be at some going-away party that was held for you down the street a number of years ago. Gosh, it does not seem that long ago, but it must have been even that long ago. I do enjoy listening to you speak—not that I probably should agree with what you say, but I do like the way you put it. I wonder if you can tell us, given that OSIS has not completed a whole cycle, whether it is premature for us to be scratching our heads about it, or do you see some tender spots that you think we should be paying more attention to?

Mr. Green: I think there are some tender spots. I do not even know the answer to this because not very many other countries are wrestling with it successfully either. I am not quite sure how we accommodate the role of technical education in the secondary schools. I am really a little at sea on that. I think probably the dramatic increase in co-operative education programs underlines it.

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During the secondary education review project process, I had the good fortune to go to West Germany to look at their dual system. I went in conjunction with an oddly assorted pair: Tom Bolton, who at that time was the president and chief executive officer for Dominion Stores, and

Greg Murtagh, who at that time was the education director for the Ontario Federation of Labour. Needless to say, they very frequently approached things from different points of view, but it was remarkable about some of their unanimity.

We were attracted very much by their Berufsshule concept, their dual system, which really has students in class only 12 hours a week and in the workplace 28 hours a week. I am not going to be completely up to date. I am describing it from about seven years ago. I do not think it has changed very much. They were paid for their work activity. They were enrolled in a formal apprenticeship, all of that.

There maybe is a point about why would we not recommend something like that. The reasons were two or threefold. One was that they had a more cohesive social contract in West Germany with labour, business and industry and the government than we have been able to achieve in Canada at any rate. I do not think Ontario would be able to achieve that kind of social contract on its own. I may be underestimating our abilities. Perhaps that was in large measure due to the fact that they controlled a major part of their own industrial and manufacturing processes and we do not control all that much.

Second, there was a undergirding awareness on the part of their whole population that without a well-educated workforce they were down the drain. They did not have timber, wheat, minerals, water and oil to sell. All they had was knowhow and processing. They were acutely aware of that so they subscribed to the need for that kind of activity. Third, they had a long tradition of respecting master craftsmen. They are very respectful people. We do not tend to have that attitude to that, so it is harder to persuade our population that that is a legitimate goal in a funny way, even when you compare wages. Even when you compare wages, I am surprised at the number of people who would rather be starving lawyers than thriving electricians, but that is the way it works out.

For those reasons we did not approach it, but I still think the clue is in there somewhere, in that marriage of labour, industry and the schools, in a different organizational pattern to provide the needed technical education, because I despair of our ability to maintain the technical facilities in the first instance and consistently to reinvest in the training processes, given the pace at which things change in that arena. If you are not in touch with the working part of the arena, I do not think it is effective. It would call, however, for a real overhaul, not just of our apprenticeship system, but it would almost have to be a national apprenticeship system. Sometimes when you are faced with that, you would just as soon not start up the mountain. Maybe Meech Lake will make it all better. Who knows?

Mr. Keyes: Can we not just follow up that question on the apprenticeship? We really must start climbing the mountain.

Mr. Reville: Yes, I did actually want to make one comment on that, Mr. Keyes. As a person who in high school had a similar experience, I think, although not in Iroquois Falls, I studied Latin and Greek. We had a high school which offered ancient Greek as well as Latin and there were a couple of other sort of near-sighted students who took Greek along with me, and I enjoyed it a great deal, and subsequently went and got a technical education out in the field and became a skilled worker.

I feel very personally the kinds of things you say about our difficulty in Canada–and I think it is true across Canada–in making technical education attractive. It clearly was not attractive to me as a 13-year-old and subsequently became attractive to me as a person who had been to law school and found it incredibly satisfying to become a skilled worker. I was probably somewhat influenced by events in the 1960s when alternative careers all of a sudden became a little bit more interesting to some younger people.

Going to what I sometimes call the plumbing university over at George Brown, one was in some despair at the program that was offered. There was nothing wrong with the theoretical, technical parts of the program, but there was a great deal wrong with the rest of it in terms of what was offered in the way of a little smattering of business, a little smattering of English and sometimes a bit of business law. It was pretty crummy stuff. That seems to be a shame. I think we could do a heck of a lot better than that.

As to the point you make, there is a joke that a plumber was asked why the bill was so high and told that that is more than a lawyer charges. I guess everybody knows that joke. The lawyer says, "That is more than I make," and the plumber says, "Well, that is more than I made when I was a lawyer."

Outside of that joke, I understand a number of people have been concerned over the years about the question of technical education. I remember it came up a great deal during the Bill 30 discussions as well. It seems to me that that remains an area which we need to continue to

struggle with as a society. I guess that is not a question; it is just saying, "Yes, I liked what you said." Now Mr. Keyes may want to follow into that.

Mr. Keyes: If you will just allow me because it is not my turn, it is the whole technical one that we have to look at in the apprenticeship. We have not overhauled it in over 20 years. Things have changed so dramatically out there. Is not one of the declines of the technical education right at OSIS at the root of it? That is what the technical directors will say and then try to forget the fact that they said there should be compulsory subjects in tech ed, as the business ed teachers both did yesterday.

The fact that the emphasis seems to sway people in their compulsory subjects is what I want to talk about. It is bound to take them away unless we can get into the whole field of learning. How many careers days have you been at recently where you have ever found a high preponderance towards the skilled tradesman being present? I think there has been a tendency to be towards professionals on the business side, and we do not have the skilled craftsmen who attend. There is a lot to do and we have to really revamp the whole thing.

Mr. Green: I would not blame OSIS so much. I am not sure what OSIS's answer is, by the way. I suspect it is the identification of a separate course, perhaps a reduction in the number of compulsory subjects or an increase in the number of compulsory subjects that come under its jurisdiction.

That aside, there are two elements which I think have led to the decline that they may have mentioned. I am not sure. One is the difficulty of keeping pace with developments in terms of equipment in the schools and the relevance of that to the workplace.

Mr. Keyes: But do you do that with co-op ed?

Mr. Green: With co-op ed, you send them where the stuff is. With tech ed in the school, you buy the stuff to use.

Mr. Keyes: I think we have to get away from that.

Mr. Green: When Central Tech, for example, needed to replace a milling machine, the supplies budget for the whole system winced because it just ate up so much money and the board never really found itself in a nice comfortable spot to set aside a depreciation fund, for example. It was always being raided for something else. One reason is the difficulty of maintaining that level.

Second, the amount of retraining of people is acute. The more important reason is the message that comes from the business and industrial community, which says basically: "We would prefer to hire people who are qualified to go to university and we will train them from there. Make sure they have.... We want a good...." All we heard through the whole SERP exercise–granted this was eight years ago–was English, math, some sense of self-responsibility and the ability to get along with other people, those are the key things. They said, "We will look after the specific training." Whether they meant it, I am not sure.

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In speech after speech, chairmen of banks–I remember one in particular, delivered in Calgary–heads of insurance companies and heads of automotive companies stressed this component. I think kids listened to that, and said: "That is the way to go. I need that solid, general education." The community colleges exist post secondary school to provide that grafting-on, or the apprenticeship system, although it is not one that they look to with any great help, or the the individual companies. I think that is the bigger reason for the decline–I may be wrong–but I do not think OSIS is, because paradoxically, before OSIS it was declining.

We even provided a protective tariff by making a compulsory subject in there that was not compulsory before, but that did not help particularly. To be fair, if I were a student looking at that option and I were going to go through a liberal arts program, such as the one that is being advocated by people, probably I would look at one of the keyboarding options in the commercial side, rather than on the technical side, unless I really wanted to work with cars, which a lot of kids do.

Mr. Keyes: Go on with someone else's questions; it is not my turn.

Madam Chairman: I noticed that, Mr. Keyes. Maybe, just as a façade that I am keeping order in this meeting, I will treat that as a supplementary and leave you on the list for a question.

Mr. Keyes: That is all it was intended to be.

Mr. Beer: If there are a couple of other things you want to follow up on, please go ahead.

Mr. Keyes: No, go ahead.

Mr. Reville: I believe there were a couple of other things Mr. Green had to say.

Mr. Green: There are a couple of little things I look at, but these are a bit more mine personally

and not necessarily others. Frankly, I could alleviate our problems by reducing the number of compulsory subject requirements. I would go to 14 and it is no secret around the ministry about the two that I would knock out. I would eliminate the fifth English requirement and I would eliminate the compulsory French requirement, particularly inasmuch as probably, I expect, over 95 per cent of the elementary school population is now in at least core French programs, grades 4 through 8.

By that time I think it is artificial to maintain the secondary program of that compulsory nature. I do not think students will stop taking it; particularly if Mr. Getty keeps on making speeches, I do not think they will stop taking it. I think the compulsory insertion of it in the secondary curriculum is more a noblesse oblige gesture, something like that.

I think the same thing applies to the French language. When we made the recommendation in the project, we recommended that the requirement for English in the French-language schools be removed as well, because they did not need them. They know where their salvation lies economically and they did not feel they needed them and said so. We took them at their word, and I think they are right.

Those are just little, wee things, but that is what I would say.

Mr. Furlong: Could you comment on the total number of 30 credits required for this study? Would you reduce that as well?

Mr. Green: I do not think that it is unreasonable. I cannot resist saying this. I know that the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation is very restless with that, yet when the number 27 was established, OSSTF was restless with the smallness of it. I do not think it is unreasonable. I still would come back to the premise that we use: that the school exists to put students in touch with people who know something about a subject area. The more frequently they can do that, the better. If we are going to rely on the school system as a delivery system for a number of our social educational agendas, then I think it is even more important that it remain that. That is my bias.

Mr. Beer: I think the whole area of technical education is a most interesting one and one that has come up. I guess if anyone had a nice, easy answer, we would have brought that forward.

I would like to shift ground a bit and look at the question that has come up a number of times; I guess it gets back to the comments you were making about basic, general and advanced and how your fundamental approach to that was that we were talking about courses, not students. We also know that any grade 9 or 10 student is, at the least, taking a mixture of advanced and general, because there are certain courses that are general, of course. But what has happened is that people have sort of been labelled.

This goes back to your earlier experience with the Toronto Board of Education. Are certain groups, cultural groups, racial groups, economic groups, in effect, being directed into the basic level? We have looked at various statistics which would demonstrate that has been happening, that we have been doing that. Eliminating basic-level courses does not mean that those problems will not continue to exist.

In reflecting back on your experience through the secondary education review project and OSIS, and with the Toronto board, what sort of thoughts do you have on how we can more effectively deal with both the economically disadvantaged and certain cultural groups that are coming into our schools and, for a variety of reasons, are perceived not to have the necessary skills or are simply being shunted into programs which, in effect, block their advancement?

Looking back at 10 years ago, are there things that you would have done differently or have we learned some lessons from that, in terms of the committee, which we could learn from in the recommendations that we are going to make?

Mr. Green: I always find myself on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays thinking one way, and on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays thinking another, in this fashion.

I certainly have been persuaded by my colleagues, who work for the most part with these students, and also by the Cochrane experience on the other end, that there are students who are probably better having the program delivered in a different building or a different setting, where they will enjoy fewer invidious comparisons, day by day, with their peers. In a completely composite school, they can be neglected.

I would go back to my experience as vice-principal at Parkdale Collegiate Institute, when we had one such class in our school, labelled the special business class. To my shame, when I go back, their room was in the basement. They did not feel they belonged to the school, and what was worse, I do not think most of the rest of the school felt they belonged in the school. Living in that kind of circumstance, it is not too cheering to get up every morning and to wander into that building.

When those students were consolidated in some of the special schools in Toronto, one of the pluses was a growth in self-esteem and a growth in learning abilities. One of the side benefits was that, with really good teaching, those were some of the most emancipated schools in terms of curriculum that one could have encountered because, in one sense, they were not committed to trying to do the same thing as other people, so they could respond to kids' needs in a faster way. That does not mean they were free of troubles or anything else. It just meant that often, in terms of curriculum, they were more imaginative.

So there is a group like that. The hardest wrestling match I had was the extent to which those became identified with either racial groups or cultural groups. That was the real son of a gun. While I was director, we certainly had a task force address that problem specifically.

I would like to say that it tends back to language problems with families who are not at home, but one of the ethnic groups that did not seem to fall into that category was Chinese. You cannot believe that their language problems were any less than people coming with another kind of language.

That is why I say, "on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Tuesday, Thursday." I do not have a good answer for it, except to say that I would probably continue to look at specialized settings where those were appropriate for a group of students, but I would really want to keep it a small group of students and have a really careful screening for it. Maybe it should be a special education route.

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Mr. Beer: One of the things that Radwanski talked about in his report was the mentoring system and, I guess, different kinds of support services that you would somehow try to build into the system. Obviously, there are a number of implications to how you do it. You were talking earlier about the Cochrane experience and how, for every 15 students, there is a teacher who, in effect, is a counsellor, a mentor, call that person what you will. Are those things they have done at Cochrane something that would be realistic—again, using Metro Toronto as the example—in a large school system with large schools?

Is Cochrane helped perhaps in doing some of this simply because it is small and that is a key factor in making that work, or can we start to build in these other support systems that will help kids in the larger schools?

Mr. Green: I think we could build in. The mentoring recommendation is one of the stronger and more positive recommendations in Mr. Radwanski's report, from my point of view. I think a lot of schools did try this, by the way, through the 1970s. They did it under the guise of house systems and that sort of thing. They tried to build in a structure that would reinforce the homogeneity that students seem to need, but I do not know that we paid much more than lip service to it. It probably takes more dedication of resources to that than we have been willing to allow for that purpose just yet, so it may cost to make that connection, but I think it is quite feasible.

Mrs. Fawcett: Are you familiar with the Silver Birches school in North Bay? I think it is Silver Birches. My niece went through that system and really, while she was going, there was no such thing as a grade. She really had no concept of grades. She just went through year to year and was told she was doing really well, and she was. She did exceptionally well.

I know her parents were concerned when it was time to go to high school, but there were no problems with the transition. I just wonder about the success rate of that school. It seemed at the time that the parents were brought in and made fully aware of what the school was about and what was going to happen. Also the teachers were hand-picked and were given maybe special instruction or in-service, I am not sure. I do not know.

It just seemed the whole thing was done well and I wonder if we do that when we bring in these new ways and so on, educationally. My niece is now in third-year university and doing well. I just wonder what the success rate of that school is and whether there really were problems with other students when they went into a regular high school. It just seemed that it worked, because there was a lot of thought and care taken at the time.

Mr. Green: I do not know the school specifically, so I cannot speak of its success rate. It would have prototypes around the province. One of the silver linings to the cloud of declining enrolments through the 1980s has been much broader communication with the community on the part of the school and a much greater desire to sell itself and to be open.

Particularly during the 1980s, there have been better forums for that transition arrangement. I will not argue that they are uniform and where a school has—what shall I say?—a captive catch to it.

Mrs. Fawcett: I remember, too, at the time that the parents were brought in to help and were

fully aware of what was going in. In fact, they had a regular parent system that worked and it just seemed that it can be done and done well.

Mr. Green: Yes, it can.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Keyes): Just to follow up on that question, I have one to ask you. We had a bit of a discussion about trying to get away from the grade promotion. I may be wrong, but I do think that at the secondary level, by credit and subject promotion, we have reasonably got away from people thinking grades, but can we do it by divisions in the elementary level? As soon as you say that, people quickly say, "Why divisions?" There is no reason, no sense to divisions. It is one of those things where you make haste slowly and you might be able to do it. If you do, how are you ever going to go about selling it to a society that hearkens back to what people remember–and I am not going to say the good old days. How do we do it?

Mr. Green: Ironically, I used to be fond of saying we were headed directly that way. We really nostalgically look back at that grade structure and clear achievement objectives that everybody can meet, etc. At the same time, we have turned around with Bill 82, in effect, and said, "We'll do this for everybody." I will be surprised if you have not heard from the integration action people indicating they feel that basically a student should go through school in the company of his peers or her peers, regardless of disability or anything else, that the isolation from society and other forms of delivery systems are not healthy, so to the extent that is possible, they should go through with their peers. That stretches the range of abilities that an individual teacher is dealing with overwhelmingly and makes it difficult to mark the others.

I do not know to what extent Mr. Radwanski, for example, was influenced by the Paideia Proposal books in the United States. I certainly was when they first emerged. I do not know whether that publication has been brought to you, but basically it is a group of educators in the US, about 1983-84, under the chairmanship of Mortimer Adler.

When I first looked at the collection, I thought they were all old fogies, etc., indulging in a nostalgic look back, but it contained also the superintendent of schools for Atlanta, whom I knew, and the superintendent of schools for Chicago, whom I knew. I thought these people would have some indication of some of the difficulties the school system was undergoing currently.

Their basic contention–and it does not have complete application here, but it has a lot–was that the American system, and probably our own, has done a good job on what they call quantity education. They offer the opportunities to more people in our society and, notwithstanding our dropout rate, keep them longer and try harder with them than most other nations in the world.

Their contention was, it is time to deal with quality education now; make sure that as long as you have them, they all reach this quality level. My dilemma with that is that if we were successful in implementing that, I am not sure how many additional universities one would require, and then do we have a new benchmark and do we have to build a super U in order to maintain our hierarchical structure without which we seem unable to live.

That is a long way around to coming back to your question. Wherever the division is, wherever the cutoff is, someone is going to say: "What is the transitional process from here to here? What do you have to know to move from here to here?" In establishing that, automatically, there are going to be exclusions, failures, whatever, "You did not make it." We know that straight repetition is not necessarily a useful factor.

The only clue I can see–and that is why I have come around to rather liking the possibility of "now you see it, now you don't" grade 13–is that you can deal with the time factor. You can say to people, without being too pejorative: "You're going to be there in another six months. This kid is there now, but you're going to be there in another six months." Most of us can live with that kind of arrangement much better than we can live with "that person is going on, but you are staying back." That calls for the individualization in a great degree of the curriculum, and I get nervous about it, but I think it is the only way in which we are going to be able to straddle our conflicting goals.

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The Acting Chairman: I just missed the name, for our researcher, of the group you talked about in Chicago.

Mr. Green: Oh, the publication. There are three parts to it. It is called the Paideia proposal. I am going to spell it. Every time I use it, I should–

The Acting Chairman: We will not ask you to spell it today in front of Hansard. It has to do with pedagogy, I presume.

Mr. Green: P-a-e-d-a-e-i-a, I think it is. Mr. Reville is the Greek scholar, so he can help us.

Mr. Reville: Yes, I will help you out with that, later.

The Acting Chairman: One other quick question: I wonder, as we are looking at it and trying to get away from the nongraded one, is there anything that could be done for those who do leave at what has commonly been known as the grade 10 with a certificate at that end? Is there a way we could combine and get away from the streaming through grades 9 and 10 that we have heard so much about through compulsory subjects, as part of a final graduation, so that there might be those who would have achieved age 16 and want to leave at grade 10, but will have a bit of a feeling of more achievement along with their fellow group, so that the streaming thing does not take place until those people are going on? It is the end of the intermediate division and you do not make your choice in the streams until in grades 11 and 12. That might give some people a better feeling of seeking other careers.

Mr. Green: I think you certainly could do that. I think you certainly could defer the choice. You will not defer the streaming because the streaming is happening before grade 9.

The Acting Chairman: It happens there, but you would not consciously have three streams for every subject–basic, general and advanced–in every subject as they try to do now. Streaming will always be there.

Mr. Green: You can defer the labelling. You would need to include a tremendous range of options within the individual subject areas that you prescribed from which teachers could select appropriately to meet the needs of students. Whether that would create a problem for people in terms of standards by letting everybody go through the same draconian process or not, I do not know. I suspect without some form of the kind of thing that is being operated under the provincial review with a relatively common administration of a provincial review in subject areas, you would learn that one school was dealing with a more difficult English curriculum than another school.

If, on the other hand, you prescribe a common curriculum, and I will take the subject I am engaged in, then there will certainly be an increased number of failures in that subject, I think.

I would not use the same kind of content, in the subject area which I am familiar with, with some students as distinct from other students. I could do that in one classroom and I could do it with a broad range, but it would be perceived by a lot of people that some students were studying easy stuff and getting the same mark for it and other people were studying hard stuff and getting the same mark for it, I think.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Green.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Green. Does anybody have any questions, since I do not know where we are.

Mr. Keyes: I was just thanking him for his presentation.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Keyes. Never let it be said there is no communication in this government. Mr. Green, thank you very much on behalf of the committee for coming before us today. As usual, we have found your scintillating wit and your wisdom a lethal combination and we very much thank you.

Mr. Green: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Our next presentation will be by the Ontario Association for Continuing Education. Please come forward.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Mrs. Dobell: We are very pleased to be back. I am Jane Dobell, the trustee of the Ottawa Board of Education on the executive of the Ontario Association for Continuing Education. This is Alan Thomas, who was with me before, a professor from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. This is Paul Blake, a superintendent of the Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

We are very pleased to be back here, having made the first presentation for one hour, which I know is a lot of your time at this time in your deliberations. I want to remind you a little bit about what we said the first time. We talked a great deal about schools being a community educational resource, which should be defined not by the age of the participants but by the educational objectives.

We described a situation where the days of considering education as exclusively concerned with the young and a one-time experience at life's beginning are past. We notified you about the problem that adults are served unevenly across the province and even unevenly within any one municipality. In some places they get terrific service, and in some places they get zero service. We said in the name of equity could you acknowledge the changes that have been made for adults in the province in different jurisdictions; could you accept the legitimacy of those changes and the creative potential; and, in the

name of equity, would you move as a committee to recommend that there be a philosophical, legislative and managerial support that these developments for adults require.

I want to underline that the issue we raise is absolutely central to your deliberations. You are talking about dropping out. We are talking about dropping in. Surely our concerns are linked. You have been given evidence by Professor Lawton and others in a research presentation here that the number of dropouts is increasing. We are not surprised about that. It is going to get worse, and it is going to get worse, according to Professor Foot, because the market is going to suck the students out. That has always been the case, and there will be no difference.

Through the 1990s, when labour is a scarce commodity, there is going to be a higher dropout rate, as there are going to be more and more jobs for the youngsters to go to, and they are going to go to them. Right now, 40 per cent of all the part-time jobs in this province are held by teenagers. That surely is not going to change. They are working not for money all the time, although sometimes money is the reason, but most of them consider part-time jobs to be a necessary part of growing up and a way of integrating into the workforce.

If schools were reorganized to make it easier to combine work and learning and to facilitate dropping in after you have dropped out, then these students who have taken either full-time or part-time jobs at the older age would still be able to complete secondary school.

The second point is that we are addressing the issue, should schools be in the business of serving adult clients at all? Our point is that adults are voluntary students. You cannot tell them where to go; they are going to go where they find what they need. They have in the past found the schools very useful. They have directed themselves to the schools when they wanted to finish their education, though not exclusively; there are many other providers. That will continue and it should. But the schools have a successful history of serving the undereducated and disadvantaged adult population, unlike the other institutions, many of which serve those who have already had a successful educational experience.

We are in a position in the school system to identify and offer help to adult parents who need further basic education at the elementary or high school level. When we are serving parents as learners, we have a unique opportunity to break the illiteracy and poverty generational cycle. We should, as an institution, be therefore an essential part of the delivery system of adult education and not, as is currently the situation, an optional one.

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We believe that commitment to lifelong learning should be the controlling idea upon which all stages of the educational system are based. Unfortunately, continuing education now is used to describe a kind of peripheral, underfunded system of education which people think is only going to be used by those who failed to complete the programs which are conventionally restricted to children. We are saying that lifelong learning has to be inherent in the educational system so that continuing education would be the term to describe the entire educational system. Here you would have students of any age pursuing the achievement of their specific educational objectives through programs which are offered by and within the mandate of the elementary and secondary school system.

Most people, when you say "lifelong learning," nod their heads and kind of go to sleep because we all agree that it is a great idea, but so what? It is not just a philosophic, vague idea. It has specific implications for the work of your committee. You should take the topics you are being asked to address, the topics of streaming, grade promotion, semestering, OSIS, school regulations, the grant plan, the current legislation and—perhaps the most important thing—the mindset of trustees and administrators and ministry officials, and you should ask, "How do all these things affect the opportunity of all students, whether they are young students or adult students, to pursue the learning which you and I know is required by our continuously changing society?"

I want to talk a bit about the implications of the restricted time budget of adult students. Adults usually have work and a family, so they have primary claims on their time. You cannot ask them to behave like the younger student. If they live in Mississauga and work in Toronto, then they may want to go to school in Mississauga on the way home from work, or right after the office or at a break from the office. They may want to be educated as an adult student in a jurisdiction where they work, not in a jurisdiction where they live.

They have to have open access. They have to be able to cross borders of jurisdictions. It is the same if they are in a family situation and have to sneak out at night from the family and say, "I will just be a little while, dear, while I get this

subject." They have to go to the closest school. They cannot go halfway across town to the school which is offering it, be it separate or public, in their tax base. They need open access, just like you have given the high school students of a younger age open access. The adults need open access to the course which is given at the time and at the place they can go.

Mr. Conway, the previous Minister of Education, tried to cope with that by taking it off the local tax base. He said: "I will pay 100 per cent of the cost. That will give them open access." You and I know that the study exists which shows–it is Professor Lawton's study–that they are not paying 100 per cent of the cost. The $1,986 is, by Professor Lawton's study, at least $1,000 less than the cost. I do not want to argue with anyone about what the costs would be, but I think everyone agrees that the costs are greater than currently stated. If the province is not going to pay 100 per cent of the cost, then it has to provide a legislative and regulatory framework so that this open access can take place.

I would like to talk a bit more about the time budget of the adult student. If you cared about the adult student, then you would not say the school day is only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. because most of the time the adult student cannot go from 8 to 5. You are disregarding the adult if you tumble the timetable of your school because that means that one course is never given at the same time of day and the adult cannot get there. You are disregarding the adult student if you do not offer something in the summertime or on the weekends when perhaps that is when they can go. You are disregarding the adult student if you are not making sure that you are scheduling courses in such a way that when the adult student wants to take physics, physics is going to be available, whether it is in the evening or some time when they can come.

I think I would like to sum that up by saying the school system should not be run exclusively for the convenience of the student of compulsory school age or for the teachers' federations or for the school administrators who have fallen into a comfortable rut. We are there to serve the students. Adults are part of the student body. Let's think how we serve them.

Alan, do you want to pick up from there?

Dr. Thomas: Much of what follows is an attempt to be helpful in terms of elaborating what the concept of the idea of continuing education would mean to the school system. We fastened on a number of a issues that we know are of interest to you and are part of your responsibilities, one being streaming.

There has been a good deal said about streaming, and I have no doubt a good deal will continue to be, but we suggest that streaming takes on a quite different idea if you see it within the context of a system from which and to which people move; that it is not only one chance at one time in life, but it is a system that makes itself accessible to people at times when they need it or when they perceive that they need it. Therefore, the ability to fit into one stream, defined by a particular educational objective, for one particular purpose, and another stream for another purpose, depending upon the background of the individual, makes streaming what it was originally intended to be, which is a pedagogical tactic rather than an administrative outcome. We think that streaming can be considered quite differently if it is seen within a perspective of multiple use of schools.

The second applies to the maintenance of the credit system. All of you know the credit system is now widely accepted and increasingly widely accepted in the post-secondary system in Canada and in almost every country in the world. The reasons for that is that those systems cater to voluntary learners, to learners who fill more than one role simultaneously–that is, they are probably workers and students at the same time–and to individuals who need the result of specific learning achievements very quickly–that is, they need it in terms of the demands of their everyday life.

What we are suggesting is that the inclusion of larger numbers of people like those within the elementary and secondary system, which is taking place in the province at the moment, provides a very convincing argument for the need for the use of the credit system, at least in the secondary school and particularly in the senior grades. What it does is give the learner very much greater control over his or her own learning and over the ability to use the results of that learning immediately rather than waiting for some educationally determined package to be completed, such as the year.

Finally, I would like simply to reinforce Jane Dobell's comment that what we are suggesting is not so much the introduction of radically new practices, and certainly not so much the introduction of huge additional expenditures. What we are arguing is that, by and large, due to the demands of adult students, more so I think than to the leadership of the educational system, many of the practices and many of the attitudes that we are

arguing for are already to be found in the Ontario school system.

Look at a number of schools in North York, in the city of Ottawa and in Peel county. I picked North York and Peel county because we are conducting a small piece of research for the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation at the moment in which we are examining what happens to schools, what happens to conventional practices, what happens to the atmosphere and climate of the school when you introduce substantial numbers of older students. In those schools in those municipalities, there is already developed a wide range of experience, skill and imagination in the response to older students. So we know we can do it. We know we can do it with a reasonably minimal change in many practices but with a major change in attitude, which says, "Yes, adults have a right to be there and they have a right to access to the same kind of consideration and treatment as children do."

Finally, almost every maximum practice associated with the education of adults is based on one single assumption, that the participation of a student is voluntary. What is required is some changes in attitude, beginning with the ministry, with respect to what the system of education is about and whom it is for. Following that, the introduction of administrative and instructional practices which accept the increasing self-determination of the student and both welcome and reflect what the student has already learned and what the student is learning in addition to what that student may be being taught.

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One might observe, for example, that one of the largest employers of young people of the sort that Jane Dobell is talking about, at least until recently, is McDonald's and that McDonald's runs a considerable educational establishment of its own. It has a sizeable institute in this city, as well as what is jocularly known as "hamburger university" in the United States.

The knowledge of what is involved in the application of the perspective of lifelong learning can already be found in Ontario schools, perhaps nowhere better than in the current recommended practice for the development of teachers themselves. What is happening with respect to teachers is a massive increase in attention to continuing education in their own profession. Almost all of the practices that are recommended for helping teachers do that are precisely the practices that need to be used with the older students in the schools.

Mr. Blake: I am going to try to pick up some of my experience in trying to deal with adults and work within OSIS and some of the other policies and regulations that come forth from the ministry.

At the risk of stating the obvious with this committee, I would like to go back and just reiterate what OSIS stands for as an acronym. OSIS means Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions. Quite clearly, its title focuses the document on those years of schooling traditionally associated with the ages 12 to 18. We believe that a much clearer distinction should be made between education to be delivered in the last two years of the intermediate division and that to be delivered in grades 11, 12, even 13 and beyond.

Once this distinction has been made, the senior division should place a much greater emphasis upon self-directed learning and the assumption of much greater responsibilities for his or her learning by the individual. The lessening of institutionalism in programming, administration and socialization ought to be goals for the senior and the adult student.

Might I direct your attention to the few pages of OSIS, namely 30 to 34, that are devoted to the earning of credits in modes other than the regular day school. There are 14 subsections in those four pages and at least seven of those 14 deal exclusively with alternative ways in which day school students can earn credits. Only one, the equivalent standing for mature students, deals with the adult and with lifelong learning specifically.

It is our belief, then, that either through OSIS in its next revision or in a specific new policy document dealing with the adult learner, the Ministry of Education ought to deal philosophically with lifelong learning and administratively with the meeting of the educational needs of the person who has left the formal school system but desires the learning and the advantages attached to achievements in school by society.

Co-operative education, in my humble experience of 30 years, is one of the better changes, if not the best, to have taken place in secondary education. I am going to suggest to you that co-operative education is extremely important for adults seeking to reach that level of education necessary for whatever employment goals they want to achieve. Without it, many adult women who have been out of the workforce most of their lives will be unable to enter for the first time, and certainly women who are out for a relatively

short period of time for child-rearing purposes find it difficult to get back in.

The benefits of co-operative education are equally important to the handicapped and the disadvantaged in our society. Yet, OSIS, ministry regulations and ministry auditors give conflicting views as to whether credits earned in the co-operative education mode can be funded for part-time students under continuing education or even, for that matter, in the regular day school. There are statements which seem to limit that.

At present, the school administrator who wants to serve adult students is hemmed in with regulations prescribing, on one hand, an instructional day of eight to five and, on the other hand, what kind of teacher may teach during that period and what kind of teacher can teach outside of that, whether that is continuing education or whether it is regular day school.

Some day programs for adults have been organized deliberately under the title of continuing education rather than under the better scheme of the day school in an effort to give adults the flexibility of attendance, continuous intake, accommodation for shift work and a recognition that adults can learn away from the school, as well as at school. Yet, acquiring, remunerating and holding experienced teachers for continuing education classes to teach side by side with teachers in the regular day school at different rates of pay and with different working conditions is difficult, if not virtually impossible, and particularly so as the teacher shortage is coming back around again.

The situation that I have described for you often leads to accusations of inferior quality in credits earned through continuing education classes. That, of course, bothers us considerably.

I would like to look at just a few other regulations that make little sense when you are dealing with adults.

The regulations dealing with closed schools: Once students are removed from it, the school must be closed within a given length of time, and this simply does not allow us to use those schools for adults.

Professional activity days are not permitted for full-time continuing education staff, those people who work every day. In my opinion, they are the very group who need PA days perhaps more than teachers in regular day schools.

Funding for adults is based upon attendance in classes, while funding for children is based upon enrolment at two critical periods during the year, something that we would say is a complete reversal of what the practice ought to be.

Adults in continuing education classes cannot be counted for new building construction and equipment, while those in attendance in regular day school, some 40,000 at last count, do count.

The virtual lack of mention of adults and lifelong learning in the act, the regulations and the other policy documents, the emphasis upon schooling as applicable only to ages six to 16, the ensuing attitudes of bureaucrats, trustees and even school administrators, are all counterproductive to a society geared to the concept of lifelong learning.

With my two colleagues, the sole purpose of our presence before you is to address the issue of lifelong learning. It is desirable, and perhaps even becoming economically and socially mandatory, that all citizens be afforded the opportunity for a basic education at whatever time in their lives the need presents itself. Consequently, the philosophy and administration of publicly funded education needs to be amended to provide for that concept of lifelong learning.

Mrs. Dobell: I would like to leave time for discussion, so I will summarize the last point as quickly as I can. It has to do with advocacy. You know that Bill 82 changed education in Ontario. It came about because middle-class, motivated parents of children with learning handicaps and disabilities lobbied for the right of their children to a program designed for their needs. I think we are all happy that they did so and Bill 82 is the result.

But who is going to lobby for adults? Who is going to speak for them and who will listen to the adults who want to finish high school? Your adult dropout cannot lobby for himself or herself. It is a 19-year-old single parent who is desperate and bewildered and looking for child care. It is a new Canadian without knowledge of how our society works, whom to talk to and how to lobby. It is an adult on welfare with self-esteem that is too low to fight the educational establishment to get what he or she needs.

Adult students need advocates. They need them not only at the local level with their school board, they need them at the provincial level, at the ministry level. If we do not have advocates for this group at risk, it is not going to be served.

Where are the advocates today for adults? There are not many of them. They are not in good positions to be powerful or to influence the action. They are fragmented and they compete with each other instead of co-operating. They have no money so that they cannot really be very effective.

On the second-last page, page 9, I go quickly down the various levels of advocacy. There has to be a unit in the Ministry of Education that addresses the needs of adults. We are now not at all clear what is going to happen: there was a unit, there may not be a unit, they are going to cut the man-year, they are not going to cut the man-year. It is not at all clear that the ministry has committed itself to putting the resources in place so that all these policies can be developed, the regulations can be reviewed and a service can be put in place.

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The other problem with the ministry is no database. Here we are discussing this problem: no statistics gathered, no database put out for public discussion. How can you develop programs and how can you evaluate how good they are without the adequate tools?

School board levels: same thing. Those who have dedicated staff to adults have good programs, but because the mandate of the school board is not clear, because the ministry has not made it clear that adults are for real and really ought to get service, a lot of school boards do not do it. That is why we are asking you to clarify the mandate of school boards.

In the local jurisdiction, we also have had about 10 studies which have made recommendations over as many years to the Ministry of Education and the minister, saying, "Please fund community-based advisory councils for adult education." Some of you may have a few in your jurisdiction. There are a few in London and Guelph. They do work, and they are members of our association, but they do not exist in most places, and the ones that do exist need a little financial help and they need more recognition from the province if they are to play their proper role of resolving disputes between different institutions at the local level.

At the provincial level, the whole thing is very fragmented. You have people who are rushing in to advocate English as a second language, another team is advocating literacy by voluntary organizations, another one is saying community education; a whole group of people talks about "my institution versus your institution"–the school boards, the universities, the colleges. It is very fragmented and it is symptomatic of the low priority accorded to adult education that almost all these advocacy organizations, our own included, have very little money.

The last part is a bit of a pitch about our organization. We are the only province-wide organization that tries to draw together adult educators and advocates from all institutional providers, both publicly funded and nongovernmental organizations, and all the specialties. Because we are not allied with any institution and because we try to develop a consensus, we often find ourselves outside any one specific view. We try to take a global view, so it is hard for us to get funding. With our limited funding, our organization is currently deciding whether we can even continue to exist. As we believe we are probably the only group which has come to you here and said, "Listen, adults are a problem that you must address," we think it would be a pity if this type of organization were not to get some funding and not be able to continue.

My closing remarks–and then we would like to take questions–are, folks, you are trying to solve the wrong problem. What you are trying to do is aim at 100 per cent retention. It cannot exist. It will never exist. The market will always suck them out, and so it should. There is nothing the matter with that. That is life. It is good. What you have to have is a system that will help them to come back in when they are ready to come back in and profit.

Yes, you can talk about the dropout rate decreasing a bit; we are not against that. Sure, it would be good to tinker a bit and see if you can retain at the initial stage a larger number of students. That is important, but our issue is important, too. I hope you are going to address it because it has never been addressed in spite of study after study, and we ask you not to ignore it yet again.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Certainly, in your closing comments, you gave us a very healthy, pragmatic viewpoint. Quite frankly, I agree with many of the points in your brief.

Mr. Adams: I thank the three of you. The brief is well expressed. I do not know if you heard the question I put to the previous presenter. I realize you can have adults being educated in what we think of as the primary level, the secondary level and the post-secondary level, but I was asking about the delivery of secondary school credits, specifically high school graduation at the post-secondary level.

It seems to me that there are the people who drop out in the sense that you describe, who do not want to drop back into any school, who may well prefer to go to a college, and there are also people who do not drop out. In reality, they leave the secondary system and go on to the post-secondary system in college where they find they cannot, in fact, complete high school graduation.

I wondered where your association stood on that matter.

Dr. Thomas: If I could comment on that, I think one very helpful contribution was made by the government of Manitoba some years ago, in which it, realizing that the term "dropout" was negative and a term of opprobrium, shifted first to "stop-out" and then to "step-out," suggesting that what we are really dealing with is a temporary phenomenon and one which may change very quickly thereafter when the person returns to school.

One of the most persistent pieces of evidence we have from the limited research we have on adult education is that people tend to choose the institution from which they most recently departed. That is, if you have not completed grade 12, no matter what age you are, you are most likely to return to the school board for whatever educational services you are looking for. For many people who have less than grade 12, college is a very scary place. Their feeling about it is that college is a place they would not understand. They have very little confidence with respect to their ability to deal with what they perceive the college to be and the school board–even if they have had a negative experience with it–still remains very much their institution in a way that none of the others is.

The evidence also suggests that if they are turned away from the school board, they often go no further. They simply do not look further for what they need.

Mr. Adams: Let me not debate the case of the dropout then, although I must say I think there is something about an adult environment and a college environment which might well be attractive to some of those people. Let us think about students who simply leave the secondary system and go into college and do a program there. Some years ago there used to be a type of calculator, and it was very sophisticated, a mechanical calculator, and you could do a two- or three-year program and you could qualify. In doing that course, naturally, in college, you did other subjects.

Such students from 20 years ago now have a college diploma but do not have a high school diploma. They go for a job. Someone asks, "What are your qualifications?" I have forgotten the name of this calculator now, but they say, "I have this qualification." They ask, "Did you graduate from high school?" and they say, "No." What I am really asking you in your association is, should it be possible to graduate from high school in a post-secondary institution?

Dr. Thomas: I just think that would be a terrible duplication. I mean, we have tried to provide alternatives as you suggest. I do not see any need to do that when, in fact, the school board can provide that service more cheaply than the other institutions can, and when we look at the dynamics, which are that, by and large, even if that was available, my belief is that many of the people simply do not have the confidence to go to the college.

Mr. Adams: In the case of the students I described, let us assume that in the two- or three-year program, they have effectively completed the work they would do for high school graduation. Should they not be given a high school diploma as well as their diploma from college?

Dr. Thomas: It seems to me that if the secondary school establishment will make use of some combination of maturity credits and the evaluation of other kinds of learning, then yes, it should. I do not think it should be given automatically because I think that would rob the secondary school system of a good deal of its own integrity.

Mr. Adams: There would be some criteria for it.

Dr. Thomas: I think if there were criteria and a procedure, just as I would argue that someone who has been out for 10 years returns to whatever level, university, college or secondary school, ought to have what he has learned outside evaluated for purposes of credit.

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Mr. Adams: Is it usual in your experience elsewhere, for people only to be able to graduate from high school from the high school system?

Dr. Thomas: As far as I know, that is generally the case. The high school system tends to guard its diploma, its award of achievement fairly jealously, as unique.

Mr. Adams: You do not see college systems doing that in other provinces.

Dr. Thomas: No, I do not.

Mr. Blake: In some ways, your question seems to me like a contradiction in terms. If I want a secondary school graduation diploma, then I should go to that place where that is its expertise. If I want a university diploma, then I should go to that place, and if I want a college diploma, I should go to that place.

If we could provide the kind of environment and the kind of status so the adult feels he belonged, might that not be part of the answer? It

is my belief that if I do not have a grade 12 diploma, I am going to go to the high school to get it–that is where it is given–but I would like to be received there as an adult and be able to have the full benefit of the services. Is the library open to me? Are the computers available to me? Those kinds of things at the moment are not.

Mrs. Dobell: Mr. Adams, have you been in any of the so-called adult day schools in the Metro Toronto area or in London?

Mr. Adams: Not in Metro, but in my own riding of Peterborough–the Peterborough Collegiate Institute and Vocational School adult day school. I visited it and I have had petitions from the students there, so I am familiar with what it is doing. I am not putting down that route, you understand.

Mrs. Dobell: I think it is good. That was my point.

Mr. Adams: It is just that my understanding at the moment is that the colleges, for example, provide the equivalent of high school graduation, but I do not believe in equivalence. If it is an equivalent, I think people should have a high school diploma. It seems to me a high school diploma is a currency which you can take from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and which is rather different in its exchangeability from various diplomas from particular institutions.

Dr. Thomas: That is absolutely correct.

Mr. Adams: I think it helps adults who, for one reason or another, have dropped out of the regular system, if they can obtain that in a post-secondary institution.

Mr. Blake: Has the grade 12 diploma not become a symbol of what we consider basic education, that level of education which all people need to succeed in our society? In that sense, it is a currency.

Mr. Adams: Yes. My thought is that is so and, therefore, students who do not have it should be able to get it any way possible. I accept everything you say about going back to high school and so on. I accept all of that and that is great. But where they have not or where they will not, my thought is that perhaps it should be delivered in the post-secondary institutions. I am trying to get your thoughts. In fact, I am getting your thoughts, am I not?

Mrs. Dobell: The other possibility is there are provinces which have what they call the GED, General Educational Development, and that is a challenge exam. You sit the challenge exam, you pass and you have the piece of paper and the ministry administers it. There is a great discussion in the field as to whether that is a grand idea or not.

Dr. Thomas: One of the problems with it is that employers discount it.

Mrs. Dobell: That is right.

Dr. Thomas: It runs into people with your feeling about equivalence and even the students discount it as being somehow second rate. It is too bad, because I think it is a useful way to do that, but it does run into problems of perception.

Mr. McLean: I enjoyed your brief very much. What statistics do you have to indicate the numbers of adults going back to school? Do you have any?

Dr. Thomas: Yes. Mr. Blake was quoting a figure a few minutes ago. You used a figure of 40,000?

Mr. Blake: It is 40,000, depending on how you deal with it. There are 40,000 aged more than 20.

Mrs. Dobell: Aged 20 and up.

Mr. Blake: You can get those in the regular publications from the ministry. The other information which we find extremely interesting and which we think gets neglected by people concerned about dropouts in a relatively simple-minded way is the figure that is related to re-entrance. That is a figure the ministry introduced into its statistical reporting in about 1986. Last year, the number of people who re-entered secondary school after a year or more's absence was just over half the number who dropped out in that year.

Mr. McLean: Are those the ones who are allowed the roughly $1,985?

Dr. Thomas: No, because some of those may be credit students.

Mrs. Dobell: When people come back, they are treated differently by different jurisdictions. They may just slip into their local school and be counted as a regular student of younger age–only there they are at the older age–or they may take continuing education. One of our problems is this statistics-gathering thing. That is why we said to you that we really cannot discuss these policy issues without a better database.

Mr. McLean: I think the school board should be very concerned when it is allowed so much per pupil and the adult comes back in at a certain cost and the ministry says it is going to fund at 100 per cent, which you indicate it is not. The school board is going to be rather upset to know it has a student sitting here in this class who is probably taking grades 11 and 12 and the ministry is not

funding it. It is coming out of the school board budget.

Mrs. Dobell: With respect, it is only the continuing ed student, only those registers, that the ministry said it would pay 100 per cent for. I personally–and I believe Alan and Paul–do not necessarily believe the ministry should fund at 100 per cent. We believe an adult student is no different to any other student. There is a local tax base for your younger student and there should be a local tax base for the adult, but to do that means you have to articulate the Education Act and you have to make it jolly clear that you cannot turn an adult away, that when the adults turn up you have to fund them. Either you pay 100 per cent, in which you are paying the school boards to shut up and just do it, or you say: "Here's the legislative framework. You have an obligation. Go ahead and do it and tax for the difference between the grant and the cost." I do not mind the latter, but we have to have either A or B.

Mr. McLean: Which one do you prefer?

Mrs. Dobell: Alan, you start.

Dr. Thomas: The simple answer is that I believe we prefer that all students be treated the same based on the program they are pursuing, that we should not distinguish between a student over 24 and a student under 18 in terms of how the financing is done.

Mrs. Dobell: A student is a student.

Dr. Thomas: A student is a student is a student.

Mr. McLean: The question has been answered. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Yes, but you have opened up such a fascinating topic. I want to pursue it for a second. I am going back to your statement where you say funding for adults is based upon attendance while funding for children is based upon enrolment, a complete reversal of what we believe the practice ought to be.

I wonder if the rationale for that does not go back to the fact that children are obliged by law to attend school until the age of 16, while adults are free to come and go. You may find that the enrolment is very close to what the attendance is, or maybe not. The closer you get to 16, it is probably the opposite, but for the balance of the children, the attendance does approximate the enrolment. In the case of adults, I have taken continuing ed courses myself and I find that sometimes if you have other priorities it drops off, particularly if it is something that is not vital to your everyday existence. Perhaps the motivation is not there.

In this case, I should clarify that I am talking particularly about the adults who are not going to upgrade their basic skills and get their high school equivalent diploma. I am talking about the many adults who do go back just to enrich their lives.

Mrs. Dobell: To take credit, though. We are talking about funded courses. We are not talking about belly dancing and the works. I am for belly dancing. It is very good physical education; I am not very good at it. But we are talking about credit courses and not many people go back and take physics for kicks. They go back because they are really interested and it is important to them.

Madam Chairman: I was going to say that if they do go back for kicks, I find that very strange. That is just my predisposition.

Do you think that is why they had that rationale, because children are really obligated by law to go?

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Mr. Blake: I can go back far enough when monthly attendance was calculated by every teacher in every school. I guess we discovered that some of our teachers were terrible at mathematics or something. Anyhow, it was a terrible job every month. We simply got away from that and we have two enrolment dates now. But when we are dealing with adults, we are dealing with attendance and we are paid as a school board by attendance hours. Yet if you try to provide the kind of education an adult wants–and I am now talking about using things like Ministry of Education correspondence courses, which is the basis of the curriculum you are using–you may have an adult who comes in this week to get some help from a teacher. He can go home for the rest of the week and work on that correspondence material and do very well. He is not in class and we are not getting any payment for our teacher. Then, lo and behold, back comes the student the next week. We think that in some way, shape or form, the adult has to be counted on an enrolment basis rather than hourly attendance.

To take that a little bit further, we have to have 975 hours of attendance for an adult to get even the equivalent of one day school, which is far greater than we do for one day school student.

Mrs. Dobell: It is just not the balance.

Mr. Blake: Sometimes we have to go by day school regs when it is, it seems, to the ministry's advantage, and at other times we have to

disregard the day school regs when it is to our advantage.

Mrs. Dobell: I think your point is well taken, but there could be a midpoint between the extremes. At the moment in Ottawa, where it snows a lot, if there are three snowstorms in a row and the students cannot get there, then they are off the register and you have to enter them all over again. Meanwhile, the teacher has been paid.

Madam Chairman: Exactly. You have incurred the same expenses.

Mrs. Dobell: That is right.

Madam Chairman: And this kind of funding does not take that into account.

Mrs. Dobell: So you could look at it in both ways.

Mr. Blake: I think the adult continuing education register was designed for the typical night school where the class met on Monday this week, Monday next week and Monday the week after. Attendance in that case became very critical to that kind of a class. However, if your class is meeting Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, then attendance is not nearly so critical in terms of the adult student, but it certainly is in terms of our payment.

Mr. Beer: I want to say as well that I found this a very interesting presentation. While I am not a regular member of the committee, I have had the good fortune to be able to sub a number of times, and just when I think I have all the key areas that will have to be covered, along comes somebody who throws another issue at us that we are going to have to wrestle with.

There are a couple of things. Just by way of comment, I think the thrust of the part of your paper that deals with advocacy is awfully critical. I think you are so right that the adult group, I suppose because it is sort of all over the place and does not fit into any neat pigeonhole, is one that at all levels gets left to the side, probably at best, and in some cases is not even thought about. If there is a perhaps not too subtle reference that OACE might need some support, I think we got that message.

Mrs. Dobell: We are going down for the third time. Mostly we spend our own, or volunteers spend money on it and so on. With respect to the logistics of doing this for the province, it just needs a bit of–

Mr. Beer: I appreciate the point.

One of the questions I wanted to ask you, and this matter has come up in other contexts, is that if we are looking at truly trying to reflect the thrust of what you are talking about, it seems to me we are going to have to start experimenting with year-long secondary educational institutions.

We were talking about some of the adult day schools, and I think we have all had an opportunity to visit some of the ones that are in our ridings or at least in our areas. If you are looking at adults and their needs, the patterns for adults are different. You were noting before that, increasingly now, we do have adults who are going to go back and be there for a set period of time, as opposed to trying to do it at night school and so on.

I want to get your comments on that idea, whether for example, that is something that maybe the province, together with a board, ought to look at, carrying out some experiments in different parts of the province?

Obviously, there are other problems in terms of relationships with the various federations and so on. However, the issue is one that has come before this committee in a number of contexts and I would like to link that with the adult area and would be interested in your thoughts.

Dr. Thomas: I am sure the reason it has come before you already is that a number of schools are really operating that way anyway. One of the things that immediately begins to blur when you consider this is, who on earth is an adult in this society? When does one start being one? The watershed is really at the end of the compulsory period. Once the compulsory period is finished and the old-young are there largely on a voluntary basis, then you have to start responding to them.

One of the things that has been happening is that more and more 17-year-olds and 18-year-olds are doing their work in evening classes; more and more of them are doing their work in summer. In effect, many schools are already operating on an 18-hour basis and on a 12-month basis.

The odd thing is that in the early 1960s when the school boards were entrusted with a great deal of the manpower development programs for this province, we were operating 24-hour schools. There was one in Toronto, one in Windsor and one in St. Catharines. Somehow we have lost that notion. The colleges have never taken up that particular side of the responsibility. I think you are on absolutely sure ground.

Mr. Beer: In that context, I suppose maybe the next jump or leap is that if we were saying to ourselves, "Yes, we are going to do that," we might want to organize it in a different way.

Perhaps we could get into a more truly trimestered kind of system that would acknowledge that one of the things we are doing is also educating adults, and even for those older kids, whether they want to push forward and do a winter-summer-fall course. It seems to be one of those ideas that is suddenly coming out of the woodwork in a number of different contexts.

In relation to this—and it gets back to Mr. Adams's question earlier about where some of this can go on—one of the other difficulties so often in education is that you have a number of different players and things start to fall between the stools of who is really responsible and so on.

You asked whether the Ministry of Education had an adult education division, person or whatever it ought to be. When you are talking at the provincial level about seizing hold of this, it seems to me that does become a critical decision. We have to find a way to say that somebody is going to be responsible; otherwise, everybody is or nobody is and we are not really doing things.

I took it from some of the comments you were making to Mr. Adams that the focus or the locus of responsibility for continuing education should be with the Ministry of Education. I am not saying that others do not have a role, but it would be the lead player as opposed to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities or the Ministry of Skills Development or any other area.

Dr. Thomas: I guess we think the ministry ought to be the lead with respect to the educational objectives for which it is responsible; that is, the ministry is responsible for the achievement of those objectives associated with elementary and secondary schools. There are hundreds of thousands of adults in this province who need access to those objectives. That is what the Ministry of Education ought to be responsible for.

Mrs. Dobell: Just a word about whether the Ministry of Education is allocating manpower. There is a gentleman called Marcel Bard who has spent a small part of his time on adult education in the francophone system. There has been a very nice person whose name is Jack Scott, who also has spent a lot of his time, but he has just got another job and he is spending only two days back on this subject. It is just not clear whether that unit is going to continue. There is great uncertainty in the field as to whether there will continue to be a unit. There has been no declaration that I know of that they are going to continue; so we are very nervous about it because it has been up and down like this for years.

I have one other point which I think relates to a presentation you had yesterday. I read it in the paper. I think it was one of the associations to do with learning disabilities, which was coming in and linking learning disabilities with juvenile delinquency and later problems, whether it be prison or other problems in life. Those who had these learning disabilities who were not properly served, as they got older found themselves unable to operate and ran afoul of the law. I think that is statistically proven if you look at people who are in prison now and diagnose them.

What you are looking at is having the adults who have had learning difficulties for some reason or other—not all of them, but many of them—coming back to school. What do they find? They find they are not offered the level of service they need to get over their learning disability. They are offered the stripped-down service; they are not offered the full service. They are not given enough upfront counselling as to whether they should do this or they should do that in their educational plans.

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They are not offered diagnoses of how good their skills are, what class they should try, what they are up to and how to start out. They are not given the kind of remediation that they need on the learning-disability front to get over their hump. They may not be offered the life skills classes to kind of pull their lives back together again.

We found in the Ottawa board that if you offer this service up front, then the dropout rate among adults goes down. They get into a class where they feel welcome, it is the right level and they succeed; but because the funding is low, people are saying, "Oh, we will just give them the stripped-down service." That is going to lead them right back to failure again.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. Dobell. I would like to commend the Ontario Association for Continuing Education not only for an excellent brief today but also for the work it is doing with continuing education. I hope that you have the funding and the resources so that you can continue your fine work.

Mrs. Dobell: We will be telephoning you.

Madam Chairman: By the way, I asked Hansard to be turned off for that last comment, so you can never prove it.

Mrs. Dobell: Oh, but I have witnesses.

Dr. Thomas: Could I make one final comment? My understanding is that, at the moment, the Council of Ontario Universities is trying to

persuade the Ministry of Education, in the most forceful terms, to put on the transcripts of students whether they have accomplished a course in evening class, in summer school or by correspondence. That is, the grade and the course would be qualified by how it was done. The ministry, thank God, has refused to do that, and I hope this committee will lend its weight to the ministry's refusal to allow that to happen.

Mrs. Dobell: It is like stamping it on your forehead.

Madam Chairman: I certainly agree with you on that one.

Dr. Thomas: Good.

Madam Chairman: That is at least three points on which I have agreed with you this afternoon. You can go away happy.

Dr. Thomas: We had better go while we are ahead.

Madam Chairman: For our next presentation, we are pleased to welcome the London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Please come forward.

Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. Would you please begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, and begin your presentation whenever you are ready.

LONDON AND MIDDLESEX COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mrs. Marsman: My name is Frances Marsman. I am vice-chairman of the London and Middlesex separate school board. On my right is Sister Frances Walton, superintendent of student services for our board, and on my left is Dr. Dave Ducharme, who is our superintendent of programs.

On behalf of the London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, I want to thank you for giving us this opportunity to make a presentation to your committee today. As vice-chairman of our board, I want to say we are pleased to see your committee established. The establishment of such a committee symbolizes the high priority that the present government gives to education. From our point of view, making funding sources more equitable for all school boards in Ontario would be a most desirable effect of the implementation of your priority in education. We will not pursue the matter of funding today but will address the four topics being studied by your committee.

Our superintendent of student services, Sister Frances, will address the first topics of streaming and promotion, and our superintendent of program, Dr. David Ducharme, will speak on semestering and OSIS. Sister Frances Walton will now continue our presentation.

Sister Walton: Good afternoon, everyone. I am happy to be here.

I thought that what I would do in the time that I have is to reiterate some of the benefits of streaming or ability grouping. I am not a segregationist, and those people who know me well and are familiar with our board would say that we are really a leading board in terms of integrating children with special needs. However, I believe that the benefits of streaming or ability grouping cannot be overlooked.

At the classroom level, streaming or ability grouping enables the teacher to move one step closer to individualized instruction. It facilitates accommodating and attending to variations in students' abilities. It allows for assignments to be given which vary in the degree of ability, so the student is not so overwhelmed by the work that is demanded. It allows students to work at their own rate, their own level of ability and according to their own interests.

It gives students the opportunities to learn to work productively with a group of their peers, and what greater skill do we need in life than the ability to work with others, to listen to others, to take responsibility, to be sensitive to what other people are saying and thinking and to come up with something that is worth while for the group?

It also makes it easier for students to approach the teacher, so that if sometimes the teacher, for one reason or another, is not able to reach out to the student, the student in a small group might feel much more free to approach the teacher with a question or a problem to individualize his or her own learning.

At the school level, it gives educators an opportunity to organize classes in ways that promote benefits to most students. Organizing classes according to chronological age or to a particular grade level is an administrative convenience. It really does not take into account the needs of the students; whereas if we could look at organizing a school in a way that gives students the flexibility to move from one group to another according to their particular strengths or needs, the whole concept of continuous promotion could be better implemented.

Ability grouping facilitates the placement of students with special needs in classes where those needs may best be met. The principal, then, or the person responsible for the placement has a wider choice and, in co-operation with the

parents, can talk about what the options are for their son or daughter.

It raises awareness, too, among all staff educators of the various developmental rates and levels, and it reduces emphasis on the grade level that often really has little relevance to the child's chronological age.

We have talked about the benefits at the classroom and the school levels. At the school board or school system level, it gives every school an expectation and support to accommodate its own students. Often a child has to change schools because the school does not have an appropriate placement. If the arrangement were such that they had a more flexible grouping and children were not always in the same class, it would probably be a lot easier for schools to accommodate their children.

Streaming or ability grouping also contributes to the continuum of placement alternatives which is really espoused by the special education branch of the Ministry of Education. A continuum of placement alternatives is needed to provide for exceptional students. What better means to do it than by having a flexible streaming or ability grouping arrangement in process?

Just to summarize, some recommendations inherent in our report are: first, that preservice and in-service teacher training provide opportunities for experience with effective ability grouping as one means of meeting individual student needs; second, that student placement in a class, a class grouping or a course level be based primarily on anticipated advantages for the student; third, that the need of some students to be treated differently or unequally be accepted as a principle for effective educational practice; and fourth, that the committee endorse the development in all boards of a range of learning strategies and a continuum of placement alternatives which permit diverse student needs to be met with as little segregation as possible.

With regard to promotion, what we really need is a flexible approach that would permit promotion throughout a school year, and this should be encouraged as a logical outgrowth of the ministry's emphasis on meeting individual needs; and that practical means of making school, school system and school year structures sufficiently flexible to accommodate ongoing promotion be researched and disseminated.

1630

Dr. Ducharme: I would like to pick up the presentation of our brief with some comments on OSIS. The first point we want to make about OSIS is that it has been with us for a relatively short period of time. From grade 7 to the OAC level, which is the period of education that OSIS covers, it provides a framework for six or possibly seven years of schooling; yet OSIS has been in place for only four years. A full cohort of what we might call OSIS students has not yet passed through the provincial system. It seems to us premature to determine at this time that OSIS should be changed radically.

The second point we would like to make is that there are some basic principles and characteristics of OSIS which we believe should be reaffirmed and strengthened. The first of these principles is the one stated quite clearly in section 1.5, and it states that individual student differences are to be accommodated to the greatest extent possible. We are concerned that recent discussions in the province of common school programs for all students may indicate some softening of that ministry policy position.

The second principle we would wish to refer to is that of local autonomy, which is found in section 1.2, and which permits local jurisdictions to select programs from among provincial guidelines and to develop courses of study tailored to the needs of the students and to the learning resources of the community in which we live.

Given the differences between the regions of the province and the diversity of needs of the students who come into the schools, we believe the retention of this principle is essential to effective education practice.

The third aspect of OSIS we would like to see maintained is the flexibility which the organization of secondary school programs around credits gives to students in building their programs. The flexibility of the credit system seen in sections 4.4, 4.5 and 4.10, particularly, permits students to tailor their programs to their abilities, to their interests and to their future plans as they progress towards a diploma. It also assists in accommodating dropouts or stopouts or stepouts who wish to resume their education in school.

This latter group would also be assisted by a more flexible school year in which there were more frequent course entry and course exit points. We would like to see alternative ways of organizing the school year seriously studied and used on a trial basis in provincial pilot programs. We believe that alternative school year patterns could have significant benefits in supporting efforts to meet individual needs through ongoing promotion, in providing multiple entry points for those who wish to return to school, in facilitating programs that include learning activities, both in

the classroom and in the community, and in utilizing school resources more fully, perhaps over the course of the full year.

Given that those are some things we would like to see retained in OSIS, there are also some changes we would like to see considered seriously. First among these is the matter of religious education credits. In recent years the constitutional validity of Catholic education at the secondary level has been affirmed and Catholic secondary schools have been recognized with increased financial support from the province. We are pleased with these steps forward.

We have also been pleased to hear statements such as that made by the former Minister of Education that the difference in Catholic schools must be respected. There are many facets to that difference, and one of these facets–only one of them–is significant religious instruction. We believe the difference that has been recognized in Catholic secondary schools could be significantly enhanced if additional credits could be recognized for religious education. Thus, we recommend that the number of religious education courses that can be recognized for credit be increased from two to four.

A second change we would like to see examined pertains to the grades 7 and 8 curriculum. The range of required subjects and learning activities makes the two years of grades 7 and 8 tremendously demanding, both for the early adolescents who are involved in those years of schooling and for their teachers. I believe in our brief we referred to that as a marathon, and that is certainly one that would be echoed by our teachers and, I know, the teachers of other jurisdictions as well. We believe that the grades 7 and 8 curriculum must be reviewed with a view to making it more feasible and more effective for the learners involved in it.

We believe also that the English requirements for an Ontario secondary school diploma should be reviewed, and we have outlined in the brief what might be an appropriate alternative.

Finally, we would like to comment on the question of levels of difficulty as outlined in section 4.6 of OSIS. We believe that the availability of courses with differentiated levels of difficulty can contribute to meeting the learning needs of individual students. We recognize that the way in which levels of difficulty have been applied has created concerns over labelling and over locking students into single-level streams. Our experience in our own secondary schools leads us to believe that these difficulties can be avoided. Thus, we have offered in the brief several suggestions for improving the use of differentiated course levels.

With that, we will end our formal presentation. We appreciate the opportunity we have had to make these comments and we would be pleased to respond to questions.

Mr. Beer: Thank you for your presentation and also for your brief. I would like to go back to the streaming and ability grouping question. You can appreciate that we have had a lot of comments on that.

It strikes me that even if we said we were not going to stream or group kids, in point of fact what would happen within the classroom is that a teacher inevitably would do some kind of grouping, at the very least. We do have to recognize that a teacher with 30-plus kids is going to have to deal with different levels of ability. None the less, we also know, and those of us who have been in the classroom and taught can recognize, how kids who at a certain time appear to be less able than others can respond to being with brighter kids or kids who, at that point at least, are working more up to their level, and they come forward.

It always seems to me that the critical issue here is: How does the school system, how does the school and how does the teacher identify when Johnny or Sally, who perhaps has had to move at a slower pace, is really ready to be accelerated and can actually do more?

I can think of all kinds of kids I have taught– I used to have an anecdotal theory that there is a whole group of kids with whom, somewhere around grade 11, something happened: The penny dropped. Whatever it was, they suddenly knew where they wanted to go and, my God, they would walk into your grade 12 class and you would say: "Is that Smithers? Is that the student I had in grade 10?"

Within your own board, how do you approach that? I am thinking here particularly of a lot of kids who sometimes are taking general-level courses but, as a teacher, you are saying to yourself, "Look, that person can and ought to be doing better, ought to be challenged," and so on. What kinds of things are you doing? What do you think we should be looking at there as a committee, in terms of our approach?

1640

Sister Walton: I guess the first step in identifying when you should move a child forward is not to try to make predictions about a child's development. Certainly at the elementary school level, I believe that very strongly; you do

not put caps on kids' potential. You always try to put them in a situation where they are going to be challenged so that they have the opportunity to be with kids who at that point in time may be–I appreciate your sensitivity there in terms of development.

It is that the opportunity to move forward is always there, that there is a sense in that classroom that the opportunity is always there, so it is not a decision a teacher has to make at a point in time. It is an attitude the teacher has and that the class feels, that you are not always in the pony group, that you can move up to the robins or whatever. The students have that sense in elementary.

Also, at the secondary level, it is the same thing. It is to move away from the label that society, really, has put on basic-level classes, that somehow basic-level classes are bad places to be. When you look at the experience of students in those basic-level programs, it is a very positive experience. To try to do what Dave Ducharme was saying is really important–to separate the student from the label.

Mr. Beer: It seems to me that you have underlined what becomes a critical part of the problem. Earlier today, when Duncan Green was here, he was saying that he always wanted people to talk about basic-level courses, general-level courses and advanced-level courses, not basic-level kids and general-level kids, yet you know that somehow we get pigeonholed.

The ability-grouping concept and that approach may be a way out of some of this, in that of course it can go on within a class; it can go on in a number of different ways. Probably we have been most successful in doing that at the elementary level, especially in the primary division. But to people outside who perhaps do not fully understand the system and just see those groupings, there is the automatic assumption, "If my son or daughter is taking a basic-level course of whatever description, there's something wrong with my child."

I guess one of the things we are grappling with, recognizing that there are differences among kids and that those differences may change dramatically through the elementary and secondary periods, is how to approach this. If we put our heads in the sand and simply say, "There will be no streaming and everyone is equal," we are also doing a disservice to the kids because we are not meeting their needs.

Sister Walton: I think one of the simple understandings we have in place is that when students are moving from grade 8 to 9 or up through the grades in secondary, they do not take all four credits at the basic level. The expectation is that they might need to take a basic English course, but they can take general math or they can take advanced whatever. The students among themselves know that too, that they have access to those other levels. That certainly has a bearing on how they feel about being in basic.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Furlong): Dr. Ducharme, do you wish to respond as well?

Dr. Ducharme: Actually, Sister Frances has picked up on one point I wanted to comment on briefly; that is, the business of the importance of where a student starts, particularly when he or she begins the secondary career. One of the things we do, which Sister Frances has been very instrumental in, is to work with the school people so that our students who go into grade 9, particularly those students who have experienced some difficulties in learning at the elementary level, develop from the outset a profile where they are taking courses at different course levels. If, in some areas, they need basic level, we try to encourage them to take some other courses at a general or an advanced level, and if it is necessary, provide some resource support for that so they do not see themselves as basic students.

The other factor I would add, as briefly as I can, is that the key thing for the teacher really gets down to the assessment of the student. I will not make some distinctions between assessment and evaluation, but it is not only the business of looking very closely at the student's performance, which we get from the various evaluation procedures used, whether it be testing and whether it be examination of specific pieces of student work and the criteria that are applied, but also the area of observation, sensitivity, if you like, to how the student is experiencing school.

At the secondary level, I think that is an area we have not exploited enough. We have perhaps in some instances not been sufficiently sensitive to when that student is ready for some kind of shift in his pattern, which you referred to.

Mr. Mahoney: I was interested in your comments on the labelling because we had a long discussion yesterday dealing with learning-disabled kids who, in my opinion, get labelled and put in little boxes. The analogy I used was that they have a sandwich board put over their heads and walk around school saying, "I've got a learning disability." I think that is tragic and has to stop.

The same thing can happen with basic kids. Our chairman this afternoon was using the

analogy that the kids who were put in grade 9F and grade 9G when she went to school were in many ways the basic kids we are dealing with today.

Mr. Ballinger: You repeated 9F.

Mr. Mahoney: Actually, 9F was the best two years of my life. That is all I need, this guy coming here giving me shots.

What about the timing of streaming? If I missed it, I apologize. I personally have felt that having a child–particularly as the parent of a first child–make the decision when he is 12 or 13 years old in grade 8 almost about what he is going to do with the rest of his life is extremely difficult. We have had a number of suggestions that they should have one or two years of high school before they have to make that decision. What are your thoughts on that?

Sister Walton: A lot of parents make that decision by saying: "They're going to take advanced. I don't care whether they need general or basic. They're going to take advanced." They are afraid of the streaming thing that will happen to them. The parents figure that by grade 10 or 11, they will know what they can do and then they will do it.

That is one way parents overcome that. I say, "All the more credit to you, parents, if you want that." The question comes, then, how do we prevent failure for that student? How do we provide the resource services and so on that they need? It is hard to say. The notion that all of a sudden someone clicks into gear, that all of a sudden it all falls together for them and they can do it–

Mr. Mahoney: It has happened to some of us this afternoon.

Sister Walton: To try to say when that happens is really difficult.

Mr. Mahoney: But you are assuming that the parent who says, "I don't care what; I'm going to put my child in the advanced and let him sink or swim and he'll survive somehow," understands all this. I am talking about the parent of the first child going to high school and the mystery of trying to understand the education system. Most of us remember things like the open concept, but streaming and semestering and all of this to an awful lot of people out there are just totally foreign words.

Should we not reverse that and say we are not going to allow that decision to be made until after at least one or two years of high school, that we are going to put them into a general educational area where we are going to teach them how to learn, where we are going to teach them certain skills, the basics, whatever they are–hopefully, this committee is going to come up with a definition for that–but not force the parents to try to beat the system by putting a kid into advanced who perhaps should not be there at that stage in his or her life. Would it not make more sense to do that?

1650

Dr. Ducharme: Our brief does make reference to trial use of nonlevel courses in the first year of school. I think that statement in the brief is a recognition of the possibility that there might be some value in delaying the decision for one year. Your comments have made me think about it in a little different way than perhaps we had thought about it previously. When we were looking at that, I think we were looking at what some of the potential educational benefits for the student might be, that there might be some benefit there. We perhaps need more information on that.

There may also be some benefit in bridging the information gap that exists sometimes between elementary and secondary schools. I had not thought of it so much in terms of its also being an education period for the parents about secondary education, particularly when a first child enters school. It may have some beneficial effects in that regard. We recognize that possibility. I think it is hard to say just exactly how long that period should be. In the brief, we are suggesting one year as a possible pilot project in some jurisdictions.

Mr. Mahoney: One other brief question, on the increase in the credits for religion courses: Are you talking about teaching doctrine or teaching the history of religion? I ask the question in the light of the many presentations we have had from people who suggested there should be multifaith education in the public schools. We never really arrived at whether it should be a multiplicity of faith courses or a multifaith course; there is a pretty big difference. With regard to the Roman Catholic religion, are we talking about teaching it from a doctrine point of view or a historical point of view?

Dr. Ducharme: I think we are talking from both points of view. I think what we would like to see is greater freedom under the ministry guideline, under OSIS or whatever its successor, if there is one, might be called, to deal with the doctrinal aspect of the religion courses as well.

The configuration of courses that Catholic school boards would like to offer certainly focuses on scripture, on the development of the

church; these are different courses. They focus also on some aspects of comparative religion, and they focus on social justice and they focus on vocation. Each of those areas could be approached to some extent from a comparative religion point of view. We are open to that, but we would like more freedom to pursue those areas within the context of Catholic faith and values.

Mr. Mahoney: I went to school in a Catholic boarding school where I lived with the priests and the brothers. It was substantially indoctrination and teaching doctrine and the moral values that, really, I think is something lacking in our system today; not so much in the separate schools.

When you talk about comparison, are you talking about teaching the kids the relationship between different religions and how they have evolved, and doing it from an historical point of view as well as–

Dr. Ducharme: When you deal with comparative religion, yes, that is what we would be talking about. When you are talking about moral questions, then there are positions on issues that are very significant to the development of the person and to the development of society. Those, of course, would be approached from the perspective of Catholic beliefs and values.

The Acting Chairman: I would like to thank the London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board for its brief. Your brief and your comments are appreciated. We are glad you took the time to come and help us in our process.

Dr. Ducharme: Thank you for the opportunity.

The Acting Chairman: The committee is adjourned until 10 a.m., Tuesday, October 11.

The committee adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Organization of the Education Process



First Session, 34th Parliament
Tuesday, October 11, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, October 11, 1988

The committee met at 10:09 a.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I would like to call to order this meeting of the select committee on education as we continue our review of the organization of the education process in Ontario. As you know, we are looking at various aspects of the organization, including semestering, streaming, grade promotion and OSIS.

Before we start with our first presentation, research might like to bring us up to date on preparation for our committee report-writing phase, which begins on Thursday. Ann Porter, would you like to comment on that?

Ms. Porter: I just want to draw your attention to the memo that was just distributed. Some of you may have received copies last week. It outlines the possible framework for the committee report.

It is basically divided into two parts. The first part outlines the policy options that we have heard in the last few weeks. The second part outlines the possible structure for the report itself. That might be useful for discussions on Thursday. Also, tomorrow we should have a copy available of the summaries of the briefs, at least for the first few weeks of hearings. That is all.

Madam Chairman: If members have no questions about the report-writing phase, we will go directly to our presentations. I am pleased to welcome as our first presentation today the Council of Ontario Universities. Come forward, please. Welcome to our committee. We have allocated one hour for your presentation time. We are very much looking forward to what you have to say. Please begin by introducing yourselves for electronic Hansard.

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

Dr. Monahan: I am Ed Monahan, executive director of the Council of Ontario Universities. On my immediate left is Dr. Richard Van Fossen, who is the OSIS liaison officer with our council. On my far left is Grant Clarke, who is my deputy in the council secretariat.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear once again before the committee. We have circulated a written presentation. You will notice from the title of this second brief that we are focusing our attention largely, indeed exclusively, on the fourth of the topics before your committee in this round of hearings, namely OSIS. We propose to spend only a short period of time speaking to the brief in order to provide an opportunity for the perhaps more enjoyable and certainly more useful stage of the exercise, questions and comments.

I have asked Dr. Van Fossen, who is our COU resident expert on OSIS matters to introduce the brief. I might say that Dr. Van Fossen is a practising academic, unlike the two bureaucrats on either side of him. He has been a part-time officer with the Council of Ontario Universities for several years now to deal explicitly with the range of activities relevant to universities that have arisen as a result of this ongoing reform of education at the senior and intermediate levels.

Dr. Van Fossen: I shall go through the brief very quickly with comments only here and there to expand upon a few points.

On the first page you will note that we do have a brief comment about streaming and then we turn immediately to OSIS. At the beginning of the bottom of page 1, I have listed some features of OSIS, in particular the Ontario academic courses, which have appealed to the universities. Their effect can be summed up as saying they will provide a greater degree of consistency in academic preparation from the young people who come to our institutions and give us the opportunity to adjust first-year courses in such a way as to take advantage of that consistency.

1. There has been a substantial reduction in the number of pre-university courses. That relates directly to that summary statement. If you found a grade 13 English course on a transcript, it could mean any one of dozens, perhaps even hundreds of different courses, depending upon the school. It could indeed have been a course which was devoted entirely to drama. With the OACs, there is a much greater degree of consistency and a much smaller number of OACs all together.

2. Every course offered will be based on a ministry-produced guideline. There will be no experimental courses at the OAC level. It was as a result of those grade 13 experimental courses that there was such a proliferation of courses around the province. To take English as an example, since that is my own subject, there will be three OACs: one called language and literature, one called writers' craft and one called studies in literature. Every OAC course must follow the ministry guideline of one or other of those.

3. Every OAC has a prerequisite, an advanced-level senior division course. This was not the case for grade 13 courses, although in some subjects, such as mathematics, it would have been a rare student indeed who did not have an advanced-level senior division course. Now it is required for all OACs. I mention that sometimes the prerequisite is rather general. I could cite the social sciences as an example in which a student could take a senior division course in history and then be qualified to take the OAC in family studies or vice versa, but there is a social science methodology built into each of those types of prerequisites.

4. The fact that the courses are prescriptive, with 70 per cent to 80 per cent of content laid down by the ministry, means that the universities will have a good idea of what students have taken and will be in a position to adjust their first-year courses in such a way as to create better continuity in young people's experience between secondary school and university. Some of the examples of what some universities have begun to do already appears on the second page of appendix B, which is attached.

5. Every OAC has an examination with the percentage usually prescribed. I can remember early on in my experience complaining to the writing team for the drama guideline that the guideline said that an examination can count as much as 30 per cent, whereas every other guideline prescribed a percentage.

One of the teachers on the writing team said: "Do not worry. Any examination in this subject will bring about a revolution in the way that it is taught. It will no longer be possible for a student to get a grade 13 credit for the annual production of Annie Get Your Gun or a grade 13 credit for standing in the gymnasium all year learning how to grow like a tree." That epitomizes what the ministry is trying to do with the OACs, namely, to incorporate a significant academic component into each OAC.

6: As a professor of English, I have been particularly interested in what has happened to English. It was the first guideline to be published. There has been significant in-service training in the workshops across the province. I attended 15 of these 40 workshops. It was an extremely informative exercise for me.

The working group this past summer has been looking at examinations from every secondary school and returning to the schools those which do not follow the model laid down by the ministry, with comments as to why they are inadequate. It has also looked at a sampling of student responses. Eventually, it is going to publish a little handbook for teachers of the OAC English to give them an idea of what should be the requirements for a first-class paper, a mediocre paper and a failing paper.

The council, for anyone who does not know, consists of the executive heads of each of the universities in the province, plus an academic colleague ordinarily chosen by the senate. In this connection, I think it interesting and significant that at the meeting of the council last week, the council passed unanimously a motion recommending to all admissions officers to require the English OAC 1 where an English course is required.

Because it is called language and literature, it focuses on writing. It focuses on academic analytical writing, whereas writers' craft, excellent a course though it may be for some purposes, is essentially a creative writing course and less useful to students who will be studying a broad range of subjects in university.

7. The seventh point, that the OAC is not to be a co-operative education course, again emphasizes the universities' interest in academic matters at this level, although we strongly support co-operative education at other levels and, as you well know, participate in it.

8. Finally, OACs are offered for one full credit, not an assemblage, with focus yet again on academic coherence.

One personal anecdote: I spent some years as academic vice-principal at Erindale College in the University of Toronto, where I would, not weekly but too often, have professors come and complain to me: "The kids don't know a damn thing. We have to start at the beginning. The secondary schools are not doing their job."

In my role as OSIS liaison officer, I talked to school counsellors and principals who tell me that students come back from university X and say that course Y is a bird course. It is a duplication of grade 13. OSIS provides us with

the opportunity to improve upon that situation. I have every intention of pushing my colleagues to do so to provide a better continuity between the last year of secondary school and the first year of university.

1020

Finally, three OSIS-related issues:

First, there is our pressing for skill testing of literacy and numeracy, which was alluded to, I believe, in the first brief presented to this committee.

Second is our commitment to re-examine admission requirements to faculties of education and re-examine what we are doing in pre-service and in in-service, all in light of the changes in the curriculum brought about by OSIS.

Finally, there is the permanent review mechanism, which is something we have been pushing for for years. My predecessor in this position, Prof. John Ricker, urged the Ministry of Education to print curriculum guidelines on newsprint and to keep them in loose-leaf folders so that curriculum revision could be continuous.

The ministry decided that was impracticable, but we hope there will be such a permanent review mechanism of some kind or other so that we do not have the kind of upheaval we have undergone with OSIS, but rather have the teachers, the ministry, the colleges and the universities looking together at the guidelines and determining in what ways they might be improved.

Madam Chairman: Are there any other comments by the panel before we go to questions?

Dr. Monahan: We are in your hands.

Madam Chairman: Maybe just before we go to the members for questions, I have one of my own. You have very lightly touched on streaming, where you have said it is "both inevitable and desirable as students mature and their personal goals and interests begin to diverge more widely." I gather you have not taken a position as to at what stage the streaming should occur.

Dr. Monahan: That is true. I think it is unlikely that our council will address that matter formally. Perhaps we are crouching behind the OSIS barricade on this one. Our primary interest has been in the OACs, that is, the courses, if you will, at the pinnacle of the secondary school system, but in any event, the courses which are directly developed for university preparation.

We are satisfied that some prior student experience in the relevant discipline is now going to be necessary for each of these OACs. That satisfies our concern for sequential study. We are also satisfied that the development of common curricula with some achievement testing in the course is a minimum satisfaction for university preparation. So we as a council have directly sidestepped that issue.

Madam Chairman: I certainly must note that you have given us the most comprehensive viewpoint on the OACs. We do appreciate that work. We will now go to members' questions. We have Mr. Mahoney, followed by Mr. Cooke.

Mr. Mahoney: I should start off by telling you that it is no mean feat to grow like a tree. I have had a great deal of difficulty doing that, as Mr. Furlong, I am sure, would agree. But I am not sure that is a justification for entry.

I sort of take the underlying sense to be that you would support standardized tests across the province. Am I reading between the lines falsely? I am talking about standardized tests at all levels, not simply for introduction to university.

Dr. Van Fossen: The council has, in fact, taken the position that there should be province-wide testing in English or français and mathematics.

Mr. Mahoney: Those three only?

Dr. Van Fossen: That is correct.

Mr. Clarke: To expand on that, the position supports having that province-wide testing in those disciplines at the school-leaving level. We have not taken a position on standardized testing at other levels, again feeling it was proper for us to confine ourselves to the concerns at that stage, but there would be a test of achievement as they are completing their secondary school career.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: What would be the purpose of it—an entrance requirement?

Mr. Clarke: The purposes of the tests would really, as we see it, be to satisfy the concerns of many parties. The universities would be one consumer, if you like, of the results, having the assurance of the mastery of the basic skills, but we also believe that this is something that parents have a right to know—how their students have matched up against certain standards at the end of their curriculum—as do employers and society generally. There should be a benchmark set as an objective for the students to achieve by the end of secondary school.

Mr. Mahoney: That would be if they are leaving school at one of the given levels, i.e., graduating from grade 12 and that kind of thing. Where do you come down, then, between Mr.

Radwanski and Mr. Dennis in the sense that one extreme pole would seem to indicate rigidity, standardized tests and stressing the content, whereas the other would indicate individual learning at your own level, Living and Learning, as is the title of the document.

From two points of view, where do you come down, say, in the secondary level and then in university? Which doctrine would you prefer?

Mr. Clarke: It is difficult to put it exactly in that polarization, if you like, or at two ends of a continuum. I think we would be somewhere in between. If you identify the Radwanski position, I think there are a number of associated things he is recommending, such as putting all students of whatever ability levels through all of the same courses. I think that many of us might feel that is an undesirable development.

At the same time, since we do believe in standardized testing across the board, not just by sampling, as the ministry is now starting to do, we are certainly a long way, it appears, from the Dennis position, as I understand it. But I have not had a chance to read the transcripts of those presentations you had recently.

Mr. Mahoney: Regarding your statement on page 2, item 7 that "it is appropriate that no OAC may be expanded by a co-operative education component", would not related work in business, if a student were seeking entry into a business course in university, or related work in engineering if a student were seeking entry into the engineering course in university, make some sense in the form of co-operative education between the two levels?

Dr. Van Fossen: I think I am right in saying that we have taken the position that this is certainly appropriate and desirable at what used to be called grade 11 and 12 levels but that in the school-leaving course, we prefer the heavy emphasis on the academic component.

Dr. Monahan: On that one, it seems to me to be a matter of time and the reasonable requirement that students shall have mastered an element of the curriculum or what constitutes the syllabus for a given course. Universities are institutions of higher learning. There are certain achievement levels which, as admission requirements, make sense. That does not imply that students might not learn all kinds of useful things, indirectly or indeed directly, but they only have so much time in school. In our judgement, if they are proceeding to university, that time is better spent on a syllabus.

You will know, of course, that some of our institutions do have co-operative programs, but those programs are longer in duration than the so-called normal program. In a sense, the students get credit for their co-operative work, but it is not as a substitute for their course classroom laboratory work. I think it is the academic considerations that constitute the basis for our judgement here.

1030

Dr. Van Fossen: If I could cite one particular example, a number of our faculties of engineering under OSIS will be requiring two OACs in mathematics, one in physics, one in chemistry and OAC-1 in English. That leaves one OAC remaining.

The faculties of engineering are recommending, although not requiring, that that OAC be in the humanities or the social sciences because they want their students to have a broader-based preparation than they would get from the required courses. They would much prefer that to seeing an OAC expanded into a double OAC with a co-operative education component.

Mr. Mahoney: Just to extrapolate from that a little bit, take the mature student coming back with perhaps a grade 12 graduation but no OACs, who is 30 years old or whatever, has been working, has a family and wants to get back in. How rigid do you think it should be, given the statements by many people that we should be making our educational system open for re-entry for those people who leave? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Dr. Van Fossen: I can really speak only about the University of Toronto where there is the highest degree of flexibility in admitting mature students. There are various routes by which they can get into university, even with less than grade 12, with no high school diploma at all. I believe that is characteristic of the universities.

Dr. Monahan: In general terms, at the present time, all of our institutions deal with mature students. Basically, that is a student who has been out of school for two years or more. They deal with them all quite separately from the category of student who proceeds directly from secondary school. In theory, and frequently in practice, although I am sure there are some improvements that need to be made here, those students' backgrounds are examined on their merits. That includes work experience as well as formal academic credits.

I think that over the next few years, there is going to be more flexibility in, if you will, giving credit for work experience. That is entirely separate from the points we are making here.

Mr. Mahoney: I understand that. It is just that it does tend to come out of the issue of entry into university.

I have one final question, if I might. Dr. Van Fossen, you worked at Erindale. I always try to remind people that it is in Mississauga, not in Toronto; but anyway, Erindale College is part of the University of Toronto and a wonderful place. I understand Erindale offers February admissions for the fast-track student, but many universities–please correct me if I am wrong–do not.

I wonder if you can address that. Should you, as a council, perhaps be recommending or pushing for fast-track entry levels at your universities across the province to enable those kids who graduate with their OACs in February to make a direct entry into university, if they so choose?

Dr. Van Fossen: First, Erindale introduced that February admissions program only last February. We have very limited experience with it. I believe there are now at least seven universities that have either a late January or an early February admissions cycle. Strangely enough, the experience of those who have been in the business longer than Erindale is that we tend not to attract students to that program who are just completing their work at the end of four and a half years, but students who have stepped out for a time, whether to work, to travel or whatever. Our experience at Erindale is very limited.

Mr. Clarke: I might just add that there has not been a very great demand for those sorts of programs but there are a couple of universities, such as Erindale, that have just started providing those programs in the anticipation that there would be more four-and-a-half-year degree completions under the OSIS program.

Mr. Mahoney: Of course, they are just at the fourth year now.

Mr. Clarke: The real demand has not yet materialized, but I think there is a clear indication that the universities are prepared to offer those programs where there is demand.

Mr. Mahoney: You touched on streaming and seemed to indicate that there should be some form of streaming, but you are not prepared to say when. Did you look at the semestering concept? While it may not directly affect your mandate, I would just be curious from your professional expertise about what you think of semestering at the secondary level, whether it is helpful, whether it is more university-like in its structure and its style at the secondary level or whether being away from a particular subject for a long period of time is harmful. Did you take a position on that?

Dr. Van Fossen: The council has taken no position. My personal view is that I would prefer year-long courses to semestered ones for the reasons that you suggest. Too frequently, it occurs that a student might be taking a French course in a semestered school in grade 11 and not get back to it for another year. That is not the way to learn French, for example.

Madam Chairman: We have Mr. Cooke, followed by Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I want to get back to testing and get a better understanding of exactly what purpose testing would serve, as you suggested. Am I correct in assuming that the testing you are suggesting would, in fact, be an entrance requirement and that failure to achieve certain levels in this end-of-high-school testing would be one of the criteria for entrance into universities?

Mr. Clarke: Yes, it has been our hope that if such examination results were available, the universities would be able to use those results as one criterion.

We have stated a number of times that we do believe that the marks assigned by the schools are the best predictor of success in further academic work. But the problem is the lack of standardization of those marks under the existing system. So the universities would wish to use those results as one supplementary criterion in their admission procedures.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Do you not fear that one of the problems of standardized testing, especially at the end of secondary school, would be in teachers teaching for those tests and that the actual results of the tests may not be an indication of what has been learned in high school, but may be a better indication of the teacher's ability to teach to those tests?

Mr. Clarke: We believe that is not a problem. The kind of testing that we are advocating is far from the old departmentals. It would be testing the achievement of certain basic skills. Obviously, if you are talking about mathematics, there would be content areas which would have to be covered, but those content areas in the new system would be specified, say, as part of the OAC guideline anyway. But they would not be going down to a very minute level of course content.

Let me take another example in the language area. We developed some years ago, and it is mentioned in here, a test which is called–I am

sorry to say it is misrepresented in the brief–the Ontario test of English achievement. One of the major achievements in the research leading up to the development of that test was the development of very rigorous ways of scoring essays so that you can get consistent marking of large numbers of essays.

That test, which was actually developed as a placement test rather than an admission test, has a writing component which is meant to test the ability of students to write the kinds of expository prose that are needed in many courses in university. That is just another example of the kind of testing we believe can be done without going back to the teaching-to-the-test problem that the old departmentals represented.

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Mr. D. S. Cooke: Others who have come before the committee do not seem to agree. My fear, obviously, is that with this type of testing, what you are really going to end up doing is shutting out more of the same people who, generally speaking, have been shut out of the university system for years now; in other words, kids from working-class and low-income families who are not properly represented in universities and especially in the professions. I do not think any technique that would increase that should be supported.

What proposals do you have to try to increase the representation from those kinds of kids in our universities, which I am sure would be negatively affected by this type of testing?

Mr. Clarke: I do not think we would share that assumption at all. We feel that some standardized testing would provide a more uniform, better balanced measure than just relying entirely on secondary school marks. We certainly do not see any relation or effect on that problem, which clearly is a problem that we all know.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Certainly, that was the case before. Working-class kids have not been well represented in the universities. It has improved a bit since we have changed the criteria for getting into universities now. If we go back to the idea of standardized testing, one of the effects, I am sure, will be less representation from low-income and working-class families.

Do you have a counterstrategy to try to increase representation from those income groups in your institutions?

Dr. Monahan: If I may comment on that, it seems to us that this is not essentially a curriculum issue. It is not an issue of student achievement. There is a host of factors that discourage young people from socially and economically deprived backgrounds from hanging in at school. But in our judgement, this has relatively little to do with the curriculum.

It is important, in our judgement, to maintain an interest in minimum levels of achievement, which levels are necessary to succeed in university. Obviously, a good deal of resources need to be put into the school systems to encourage those children to stay in school. Making, creating or maintaining a limp curriculum does not seem to us to be fair to those students, because when they do seem to succeed in achieving things, the reality is that they do not.

If we go to the university level, it may be that our universities need to expend some more resources in what we call makeup work. By and large, we do not do very much of that. Our system is, if you look across North America, fairly atypical in that respect. At the same time, the students in our institutions have, overall, a minimum level of competence when they come, on which we can build. This is the thrust that is in this paper here. That is not to gainsay real problems in encouraging people to go on.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I agree the issue of accessibility to our universities is more complicated than just testing at the end of secondary school. There are a lot of other factors. One of the other factors, some of us think, would be streaming at the end of grade 8 so that large numbers of kids from working-class families get streamed into basic-level courses and never get to university. I am not sure you solve the problem by putting more barriers in place. If the council is concerned about accessibility, and I am sure you are, it is somewhat surprising then that there are not any comments about streaming and what effect streaming has on who comes to your institutions. Is that not a valid concern? Does that not impact on what types of students you are getting into your universities and what role the universities play in Ontario?

Dr. Monahan: We are taking the position that, first and foremost, the institutions are academic institutions and the students, as well as the faculty, are there to do academic work, and it is a legitimate consideration to attempt to determine the ability of the students.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: They also play a social role, though.

Dr. Monahan: That is true. That is why I said that, first, they are academic institutions. This is a matter of legitimate debate, of course, but it is our considered opinion that before anything else,

they are academic institutions. I guess I can put it no more simply or bluntly than that.

Mr. Villeneuve: Thank you, gentlemen. I, too, want to delve a little bit more into the testing that you suggest. Has this been done anywhere on a trial basis, to this point?

Mr. Clarke: No. We do have these tests which have been developed in the last few years, which have to this point been used by universities generally for placement, screening and diagnostic purposes rather than for admission purposes. Also, some of the universities–the University of Toronto is one example–have talked very seriously about developing their own kinds of specialized tests for admission purposes. There are some instruments out there already that could, we believe, be adapted.

The most recent one we developed is a test of English as a second language, which has an oral component in it, because we find that very often visa students coming into the universities may have passed standardized tests. There are a couple of American tests that the universities have used as some sort of measure of ability in English language for non-native speakers, but we frequently find that they may get an acceptable score on a written test but have real, serious problems with the verbal interaction in the classroom. So there are some of these mechanisms, and we have some experience in using them, at least for diagnostic purposes and so on.

I think the pressure to go to across-the-board admission testing in the universities has been reduced a little as a result of the OSIS reform and the very high hopes that the universities have for the Ontario academic courses. This will improve significantly, we hope, the preparation of students. We think there are some signs of that already, but we still feel it would be useful to have those general achievement measures in language and mathematics for the school-leaving level. We would prefer not to unilaterally do this by creating our own admission tests, although it certainly could happen in one or two of our institutions, but I think people are still waiting, really.

I believe, Professor Van Fossen, that is true in the University of Toronto. The decisions on admission testing have been put on hold in order to see how the situation develops.

Does that answer your question?

Mr. Villeneuve: To a degree. It is not to establish any corrective measures within the system; it is to provide you with a photograph of a student's knowledge, to a degree, which would possibly assist you in directing this student. Are we talking to assist you in possibly streaming a group of students at the university level, without calling it streaming? You will have a photograph of a student's potential, basically his knowledge, his or her ability to acquire knowledge, his working ability in languages and mathematics, but from that point on, it is not a corrective measure, it is an assessment tool, as opposed to a tool to correct problems.

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Mr. Clarke: There are several elements there. The tests that have been used that our council has worked with developing in recent years have been diagnostic and placement tests to assist with corrective measures. If they can identify specific areas of strength and weakness, for instance, they can identify the need for remedial work in writing, let's say, which is one component of this Ontario test of English achievement. They have been used in a number of the universities that way, to identify the need for supplementary assistance in one skill area.

We have also done some work in developing diagnostic tests in mathematics, again, where you would identify areas of weakness and possibly use them to stream students into different courses. There is streaming in the universities at the first-year level, there are different levels of difficulty in mathematics for students who have different needs in terms of the programs they study subsequently.

So, one can distinguish two areas, essentially–the sort of diagnostic/placement area and the assessment area–and we are really in favour of having both.

Mr. Villeneuve: Just as a last question, would these tests possibly provide you with the potential that a student may have as opposed to possibly not having reached, for whatever personal or school reasons maybe, his or her maximum ability to achieve, and yet without being an IQ test, it is something that would say that we know there is more untapped potential in this student than really the results of the exams are showing? Is this that type of test?

Mr. Clarke: No.

Mr. Villeneuve: It is not oriented towards that at all.

Mr. Clarke: No. As I think we mentioned, we are not in favour of the type of standardized aptitude testing that is used widely in the United States. We really do not believe that kind of multiple-choice test can identify potential. We are concerned with measuring general achievement levels in basic skills without veering over

on the one side to aptitude which tends to get awfully close to IQ testing, or, on the other side, to the old departmental type of thing which is too specific and too closely geared to the minutia of the curriculum.

Mr. Villeneuve: I think you have kind of differentiated it for me, and I appreciate that. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve, and I would very much like to thank the Council of Ontario Universities for your contribution to our committee today.

Dr. Monahan: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: The next presentation this morning is by the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, if you would come forward, please.

Good morning. Welcome to our committee. We are pleased to have you before us today. You may begin your presentation whenever you wish, and if you could just start by identifying yourself for the purposes of Hansard.

ONTARIO SEPARATE SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Gagné: Thank you, Madam Chairman, and members of the committee. My name is Omer Gagné and I am the president of the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association. I also serve as a trustee with the Lambton County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, and I am a resident of Sarnia.

On my left is Betty Moseley-Williams who is the first vice-president of our association. Mrs. Moseley-Williams is from North Bay and serves as a trustee on the Nipissing District Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

On my right is Ernie Nyitrai who is the executive director of OSSTA.

On my far left is Rolly Fobert who has been a consultant with our association since his retirement from the Metropolitan Separate School Board, where he was assistant director with specific responsibility for secondary education. Mr. Fobert served in the Ministry of Education for several years, and from 1979 to 1981 served as director of their senior and continuing education branch, then called the senior and continuing education branch. It is not our intention to read our brief to you. We would rather direct your attention to parts of it and, we hope, as a result leave ample time for dialogue following the verbal presentation.

We have noted that in this second round of deliberation, your committee is primarily concerned with secondary education. We understand that you would like our views concerning such features as semestering, streaming and grade promotion.

The members of the committee will remember that Catholics in this province have had a long association with secondary education. Catholic secondary education has been part of the history of Ontario since before Confederation. I refer you to the top of page 2 of our brief.

In the Catholic understanding of duties, we believe that parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, which they share with the church and public authorities such as the board of trustees of a school system and the Ministry of Education. We state this at the outset since we firmly believe that public education must not deny the primary responsibility of the parent.

It is because of the concerns expressed to us by parents that we make reference in our brief to school facilities. The lack of adequate school facilities for the delivery of Catholic secondary school programs has been a major concern of parents and school boards in many parts of this province. As a consequence, this concern has tended to overshadow other issues which in the normal course of events would be of equal or greater concern. It is difficult to address curriculum questions in an environment that is primarily concerned with shelter.

We have noted that the problems relative to school facilities are not within your terms of reference and therefore we do not intend to expand upon this issue with you.

We do not present detailed recommendations since many of our boards have presented submissions to you in which specific recommendations have been made. We continue to require a certain flexibility in curriculum development which allows us to maintain a Catholic school system. We share with you only four recommendations.

The first recommendation is found on page 5. It reads, "OSSTA recommends that there be a review of OSIS, with special attention given to the Ontario secondary school diploma requirements." As noted in our brief, our association recognized the need to review the diploma requirements as they were enunciated in circular HS1.

Mr. Fobert: As members of the committee will know, circular HS1 was the predecessor of the OSIS document. In its last edition, the diploma requirements were set out at 27 credits for the Ontario secondary school diploma, of which only nine were compulsory; and six

credits, or grade 13 courses if you like, for the Ontario secondary school honour graduation diploma.

Mr. Gagné: We supported the secondary education review project. The present OSIS document grew out of that review. We agree with the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association that OSIS is not a fundamentally flawed organizational plan. We agree that it can be improved and believe the improvement can come in the requirements for the Ontario secondary school diploma.

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We share the concern of the Premier (Mr. Peterson) and others relative to the high rate of secondary school students leaving school before graduation. It appears that all the research relative to the dropout phenomenon has taken place in public secondary schools. We do not believe that the dropout rate has been as high in Catholic secondary schools. In making this statement, we are quick to point out that if this is true, it may have been more as a consequence of the admission policies of the private secondary schools.

Since research is not available, we cannot respond with any definitive answer. We know that the Catholic secondary schools, under the jurisdiction of our boards, provide programs of study at the basic, general and advanced levels of instruction. We believe that in the short history of publicly funded Catholic secondary education, we have had much success in encouraging students to remain in school to graduation. This view does not preclude the need to review the secondary school diploma requirements, since we recognize that the high dropout rate may well become part of our reality in the future.

Our second recommendation is found on page 8 of the brief. It relates to the question of competency levels. OSSTA recommends that competency levels be established for each of the learning objectives, with the condition they do not discourage students, but encourage them to remain in school to graduation.

We have followed with interest the discussions between what we will call the pro-Radwanski forces and those we will call the pro-Hall-Dennis forces. In the discussions, it often appears that extreme positions are being taken. We believe that a balance between these two extremes is necessary.

We support the establishment of competency levels for each learning objective that are appropriate for each student. To establish a competency level which the less-gifted child cannot reach will be self-defeating and to establish a competency level which can be too easily reached by the more-gifted child can be equally self-defeating.

Young people enter the school system with varying intellectual gifts. Should the competency level be established to enable the less gifted to achieve the objective? Will the competency level be set in such a way that the gifted are not challenged, but the less gifted find it impossible to reach the level? Some students in our secondary schools are reading at the elementary school level. Will they be denied a secondary education and a secondary school diploma? If they are not denied a school diploma, what guarantee will there be that the diploma indicates an achievement at a certain competency level? These are the kinds of questions that surface with regard to the competency issue.

We challenge the designers of curriculum to develop programs, including the establishment of learning objectives, in such a way as to encourage the less gifted to remain in school and to obtain a secondary school diploma and the more gifted to remain in school to graduation.

Now I would like to call on Mrs. Betty Moseley-Williams to continue.

Mrs. Moseley-Williams: In our brief presented to you last summer, we noted the following: "One of the responsibilities of the Catholic school is to impart Christian doctrine in an organic and systematic way. This responsibility is achieved by the presentation of religious education courses."

Our third and fourth recommendations continue with this theme. The recommendations are found on pages 11 and 12 of our brief. Recommendation 3 reads as follows: "OSSTA recommends that the Ministry of Education revise Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (OSIS) to permit up to one credit in religious education in each of grades 9, 10, 11 and 12." Recommendation 4 states: "OSSTA recommends that schedule A of regulation 269, Ontario Teachers' Qualifications (Intermediate and Senior Division Options) be amended to include religious education."

You are probably weary of hearing these recommendations from the various Catholic groups which have met with you. In conscience, we cannot let an opportunity pass without once again bringing these matters to your attention. They are most vital to our secondary schools. Religious education or theology courses are part of the reality of a Catholic secondary school. They are part of the reason for its existence.

In a society which prizes accreditation, or credits if you like, it is difficult to demonstrate the importance of a program where no accreditation is given. Students are given the impression that since a diploma credit is not given, the program is not of much value. To a degree, the same thing can be said about teacher accreditation in religious education.

One of the reasons often quoted by those who oppose the granting of a diploma credit in religious education is the belief that the program has little scholarship. We disagree with this view but have difficulty dispelling the myth. In fact, the Catholic educational community has produced a religious education guideline which outlines the program to be followed in each of the five courses. We have provided a copy of that and I would like to read a paragraph on the page after page 5:

"The religious education curriculum guideline 1987 has been developed in conjunction with and is endorsed and approved by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association."

Even a cursory review of the document will show that it is a program that has academic substance. We hope you will take the time to review it, since we believe that you will agree with us that it is a document which outlines a program which has much scholarship substance.

Since religious education or theology is a discipline, teachers responsible for the delivery of the program must have a sound knowledge of the subject matter, along with the appropriate and related teacher training. It is with respect to the nature of religious education as a teaching discipline that we recommend the amendment to regulation 269.

Mr. Gagné: This brief does not include any recommendations relative to streaming and semestering. We believe there is merit for students, at least in grades 9 and 10, to remain together in class groupings for most of their common subjects. We also believe that there is value in a common program of learning for grades 9 and 10 students.

We suggest, however, before any definitive changes of these kinds are made, that pilot programs be instituted and that these programs be evaluated carefully to determine the impact that these changes may create in students' attitudes towards schools and the effect they have upon the dropout rate.

Thank you very much for your time. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

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Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will start off the members' questioning with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the brief. Good to see you all here again. I would have been shocked if you had not put in your plug for the credits. I just want you to know that. You would all have been held accountable, I am sure, in some other forum if you had not done so.

I want to ask you a few questions. As we get closer to trying to write our report—and goodness knows, with what success about consensus. No one has a notion about that. We do not talk to each other about these things to know what is going on in our furtive little minds here—I want to try to put together some of the things that are coming through.

There seems to be a trend towards the notion of some kind of either a move to or experimentation with the notion of grades 9 and 10 being destreamed in some way or other. You can notice that a lot. On the other hand, we are primarily hearing people saying: "Don't touch OSIS. Let's review it. There may be some problems that we have heard about from various groups, but basically let's not tamper with it until we can do a systematic review."

As I look at this, I think these things are all intertwined and it is very difficult to see how you manage one without the other. You allude to it in your report, actually, in terms of the notion that if we move to 9 and 10 being destreamed, you do not want to see a total lack of options in that. On the other hand, if we were to move to that kind of a format, clearly the notions that we have of the credit system as it exists have to be changed somewhat, and therefore OSIS would have to be adjusted somewhat to allow it to take into account the notion of more general-level courses, if I can put it that way, in grades 9 and 10.

I wonder if you have given that much thought in terms of, if there were that kind of experimentation undertaken, how we might go about that implementation so as to adjust OSIS without throwing out OSIS, if I can put it that way.

Mr. Gagné: Thank you for your question. I will refer that to Mr. Fobert.

Mr. Fobert: You will remember that prior to the introduction of the credit system, there was a period of experimentation in this province. You may recall that there were six public secondary schools which were identified as experimental

schools in which the credit system was instituted. This is prior to any suggestion of the credit system being placed in circular HS1. Our association believes that some method such as that might be an appropriate way to introduce some changes in our OSIS program without upsetting all that which is about us now.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other thing that comes up continually both from the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and now from yourselves is the fact that if we were to destream the high school level, to whatever extent, we would really have to take into account the training of teachers to deal with a destreamed system so we would not end up with more kids becoming dropouts because of a lack of attention, etc., the theory that you can do better under streaming.

In your system there has always been a much greater crossover of teachers from the elementary panel into the secondary panel. In fact, some of your boards are, right now, destreamed in terms of their philosophical approach to things. They have managed this. I guess what I want to hear from you is the extent to which this retraining is going to be required, when clearly parts of your system are already working in a fairly destreamed fashion. You have already had people going back and forth between the heterogeneous classes of grades 7 and 8 and then the more streamed classes of 9 and 10 within your system in terms of the teachers. What are we actually talking about here? We have not really talked about this in any detail.

Mr. Gagné: I will refer that to Mr. Fobert again.

Mr. Fobert: You are quite right that it is likely true that there are more elementary school teachers working in Catholic secondary schools than you would find elementary school teachers working in public secondary schools. As a consequence, those teachers with that kind of background, those kinds of experiences, have had much more experience and training in dealing with a variety of learning experiences in the classroom. So there may not be as much in the way of training required, but I think that there will yet be a significant amount of training.

We do not want to get into fully unstreamed programs. This association is not sure that that is the right thing to do yet. We believe there is some merit, but we are not sure. If experimental programs were instituted, part of the experiment would require some kind of in-service training for most of the teachers, maybe not all.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am just trying to get some idea of how large this problem is and how much of it in fact we are going to see the example of.

The notion of homogeneity is one which I have real difficulty coming to grips with anyhow. The idea that in every vocational course the students are so homogenous that they do not all have individual learning differences is one I do not accept at all. It seems to me the range may be slightly different, but there is a fair range of ability, even within a basic-level school. So the teacher has to understand individual differences already.

I am trying to understand what extra training is required to be able to deal with the further heterogeneity that might be involved by having advanced, general and basic as well as the learning disabled, for instance, who might be with them in that class right at this present time. What more do they actually need, do you think, and how much is already there?

Mr. Fobert: I do not know whether the association has an answer to this, but we have discussed it informally. One of the major needs that will have to be met will be changing the attitude of the teachers towards the matter that is part of the curriculum—in other words, to change that for some of those teachers who may be more subject-centred than pupil-centred, which exists at the secondary school level and which we do not find quite so evident at the elementary school level. So it is a change in attitude rather than so much a change in teaching style.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess that is what I was presuming as well. We just had not gone any further with the discussion. People were positioning themselves rather than asking, "If you were going to look at this in terms of an experiment or even a massive change, whatever, what are the changes that would have to take place in teacher training?"

There is another thing I wanted to ask you about because it has been one that has been, I hope, bothering all of us. You have come before us, for instance, with the extra Catholic credits, religious credits, that you want. We have had people coming to us concerned about the deficit in technology courses because of the way OSIS is working, and wanting more mandatory technology courses, more mandatory business courses, more mandatory arts courses.

Right at the beginning, although we have not heard this much lately, was the whole question: If one of our goals of education is a physically sound body and people are aware of that kind of

issue, then having one mandatory health credit and physical education credit throughout your entire high school curriculum is something which should be changed. That was brought before us.

Again, putting that in the context of not tampering too much with OSIS, what are your thoughts on those matters, those constituents coming forward with their various perspectives on changes to credits, whether they are mandatory or not mandatory in terms of the religious credits. It may or may not be.

The ability to give a credit rather than just a course that is taken, as happens in many of the Catholic schools, is problematic within the context of 30 credits within the system while trying to leave some optionality for students, especially if they happen to be taking a French course in a serious way in the province.

I just wondered if you could give us any extra help with that problem.

Mr. Gagné: I think you can see in our brief that we now have the religious credits for grades 9 and 10, and we are asking for their extension in grades 11 and 12. Once you read our Institute of Catholic Education guideline, you will see that the religious credits have much academic substance to them. We would wish to continue that to the end of our high school years.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I accept that, but I also accept the music teacher who came before us and asked, "What is happening to our society when music, although it is a very big part of our social scene, has very little now to do with our whole learning scene, which is so important to the development of notions of language, mathematics and other kinds of concepts?"

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Then we get people coming in and asking, "What is the point of having acquired immune deficiency syndrome education supposedly going right through high school when the kid can only take one health class and may get two sessions about AIDS in grade 9 and may potentially never hear anything about it later on?" Others come in saying, "We devalue tech courses now to such a degree that we have lost 29 per cent or 30 per cent of our courses in tech education, and we really need to make a statement that that is important."

The difficulty that we are charged with when we look at OSIS and the notion of the 16 blocks of mandatory credits is should that be touched, in your view, in terms of any of these other matters that are being raised by these various groups?

Mr. Nyitrai: Although 30 is identified as the number to graduate from high school, and this may indeed be heresy to some extent, it does not necessarily mean that one would not be able to take more than 30, obviously; it is available to them.

In the area of granting a credit for the religious educational courses in grades 11 and 12, which currently is not available to the students who are there–for those who would wish to graduate from a Catholic high school and are involved in a Catholic high school–the ability to be able to offer four credits and to gain four credits could be seen to be in addition to the 30 that is currently there. That is one possible way of being able to address this.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It clearly addresses the advanced student as well.

Mr. Nyitrai: No, it could occur at the other levels as well. It does not necessarily mean to the advanced student.

Another element that was raised once is to allow the school board one mandatory credit option, which would be the school board's responsibility to gain. As an example, let's take a high school that may be centred in the very rich resource communities that we have in Sudbury, North Bay and the Timmins area, where the mining technology component might very well be an important element to be taught for those who wish to remain in the community and, therefore, the high schools that are there may choose to offer that course and not standardize potentially for every one of our high schools, whether Catholic or not. That is another possibility to look at.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I appreciate that. I do think the first option, though, has some concern for me, if looked at in those terms, that a lot of kids would get 33 credits, for instance, going through. It looks like–we have not had a chance to really study it–people who are taking plus 30 credits at this stage are all at the advanced level. People are saying that one of the problems for dropouts under OSIS is in fact the raising to 30 credits for the general-level student. Therefore, I was just wondering whether that first suggestion would be any help at all to the general-level student, who the arts teacher is still saying would be really good if that kid could get some arts basis as well in his or her education. We are sort of looking for the wisdom of Solomon here and how to cut up the credits in order to make everybody happy.

Mrs. Moseley-Williams: I think that in many of our high schools because we are very new to offering all of those levels we do not have a lot of choice at grades 9 and 10. I do not know whether

they do in a public high school. You realize that in many of our high schools, if there is any flexibility, I have not heard; they are required subjects. The flexibility and the options come after that or at the senior levels.

When we are talking about the religious education requirement and the wish for accreditation, in many of our high schools now, it is a mandatory subject at the grades 9 and 10 level as well as the other subjects. When we are looking for it for the four years, you realize we are not looking for it as a mandatory. It is an accreditation we are looking for.

I also have the concerns–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I understood it was not mandatory but if you add it as another credit and there is a great push from the school to take it, as there would be and as there is now even on a noncredit basis, then that restricts how we have to look at other mandatory subjects as well. All I am saying is that it is just part of the mix that we have to deal with.

Mr. Fobert: I may point out to Mr. Johnston as well that during the years I served as director of the curriculum branch, much controversy was about the increase in the number of compulsory subjects. Part of what we did was look back at what it was like back in the 1940s and 1950s. Much to my surprise, I discovered there were very few required subjects for the diploma when I went to school. I thought they were required, but they were not. The number was very small; if I remember correctly, English and physical and health education in grades 11, 12 and 13 for a student taking a so-called general program back in those days. So the controversy continues to ensue, and I do not think any of us really has the definitive answer.

Madam Chairman: They may not have been required subjects, but speaking from the experience of one who went to a relatively small high school, they were the only choice we had.

Mr. Fobert: That is right, exactly. I agree.

Madam Chairman: Either that or you did not take courses at all. That was your choice.

Mr. Fobert: I was in a large high school and I thought they were all required subjects.

Mrs. O'Neill: I was trying to decipher from the tone of your voice as you went back to HS1 whether you were yearning for it to return or whether you just wanted it reviewed. I wonder if you can help me and I wonder if that is tied very closely with your recommendation 1.

Mr. Fobert: I cannot speak for OSSTA in response. Yes, to a degree there is a yearning, because I do believe that the number of compulsory courses in our secondary school program does provide us, in the operation of our schools, with some great difficulty in meeting some of the needs of our students and, at the same time, some of the needs of our various communities. I just believe that 16 is probably too many as compulsories. So there is yearning to a degree, but as noted in our brief, there is much in OSIS which is very, very good and should not be discarded.

Mrs. O'Neill: If I may ask you, and certainly from your experience with the Metropolitan Separate School Board you could answer this, do you feel the certificate of education, the exemptions and the substitutions are being used to their fullest by the secondary schools under OSIS? If not, how could we help that to happen?

Mr. Fobert: I do not believe they are being used to the fullest and I think it is probably more a lack of experience with it than anything else. I do not think all of the elements of OSIS have filtered through and into all the secondary schools.

I would refer to some of the learning packages which are part of that document. I refer you to some of the elements in the guidance and counselling program which are part of that document which in fact are not part of many of our secondary schools, admittedly. I think we just have not had time to adequately introduce all of those elements yet.

Mrs. O'Neill: Then may I ask what you have in mind, if you can be specific, regarding recommendation 1? If time has not been used to its fullest or we have not had enough time, so to speak, what aspects of the document do you feel need serious review?

Mr. Fobert: Again, I think our concern is primarily with diploma requirements. I think Mr. Johnston was getting close to the crux of the problem relative to what is the appropriate number of credits and what is the appropriate number of compulsory courses that one should suggest be part of the diploma requirements. We believe there is some problem particularly relative to the dropout vis-à-vis number. We have gone from 27 to 30. For most of the youngsters in our school, that presents some difficulty. In one leap, we moved from nine compulsory courses to 16, and for some that has been a problem. So I think it is number.

At the same time, we say that with some degree of hesitancy, because we recognize the import of maintaining the scholarship that the post-secondary schools–and the previous group

obviously was concerned about that—wish to see in the students they are going to receive.

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Mr. Keyes: I apologize for not having had a chance to hear the presentation, but I have had a chance to quickly glance through it. There is one area that is kind of obliquely referred to, yet not fully a recommendation, and that is the business of grade promotion.

When you talk about your second recommendation, of competency levels being established for each of the learning objectives, is that your way of saying you would be happy to do away with grade promotion completely? If so, the question I have asked several other groups is, how are we going to take what in essence is a monumental step from the standpoint of public acceptance, not from the standpoint of accomplishment, and how are you going to help in that regard? I am not sure who wants to answer in that area.

Mr. Fobert: The association supports the status quo with regard to the promotion practices in our schools; in other words, promotion by subject rather than by grade.

Mr. Keyes: That is at the secondary level.

Mr. Fobert: At the secondary school level, correct. Because the issue was elementary schools, we have not addressed per se that question vis-à-vis the elementary schools, but I believe the association would support again the status quo, that is, grade promotion in the elementary school, rather than going into any kind of rotary system.

Mr. Keyes: Because you do represent elementary students as well in the group.

Mr. Fobert: Yes.

Mr. Keyes: I just thought, because of the fact that you were using this idea of learning objectives for the measurement, perhaps you were getting away from grade promotion. Now you are saying no. You apparently want the status quo.

Maybe this is a refinement on the question from Mrs. O'Neill that you just finished answering. I want you to give me a better clarification on what you have said, on page 8, on the setting of "learning objectives, in such a way as to encourage the less gifted to remain in school to obtain a secondary school diploma and the more gifted to remain in school to graduation." Give me a little more clarification, following her question on the difference between your view of the high school diploma and the high school graduation. I did not think it was just a certificate of education that ended in grade 10 you were referring to in these comments.

Mr. Fobert: We believe that a significant amount of research must be devoted to the questions related to the generation of curriculum objectives that are appropriate for each child, with the competency levels established so that the not-so-gifted child can enter a secondary school program, feel a level of comfort within that program for the four years or so he attends the school and ends up with a diploma—whether it is a secondary school diploma or some other diploma, we are not sure yet—indicating that he has spent four years there and, in relationship to his competency level, has met these objectives. We think that is possible.

It is going a little further than we believe Lloyd Dennis suggests we go with some objective testing, but not going as far as we believe Mr. Radwanski is saying, that each and every student has to jump certain hurdles before he can get into the next grade. It is a difficult task, but one we believe is not impossible.

Mr. Keyes: It is perhaps quite difficult in the minds of the public to accept the two pieces of paper you take out of high school; with one a person is a graduate of high school, with the other he is not a graduate but did get a diploma.

Mr. Fobert: I think at least one other submission that the committee received referred to the import of the transcript as maybe a better indication of that which a youngster achieved. I think this is the kind of thing we would like looked at a little more.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Fobert. Just before we leave you, Mr. Johnston has one final point of information to make.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Again, I was trying to come to grips with these mandatory and nonmandatory things. We have been hearing people's concerns about the one phys ed credit, but what we do not know is how many people actually take it for three or four years during high school, even though it is not mandatory, except for the one credit, and take it as an option. I am wondering if we should try to find out from the ministry if it has any statistics on that in terms of what the percentage retention is, or do people take only one or two phys eds and then leave it at the high school level.

I would like to ask you if you have any anecdotal information on that, and also suggest that we should try to get that statistical information from the ministry, if possible.

Mr. Gagné: We do not have that information.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you have any idea?

Mr. Fobert: We do not have it, but I know the Ministry of Education has it in its statistics.

It appears again that some of you who have had students attend school, as I did, during the late 1960s and early 1970s and the introduction of the credit system and the openness of the program may have had some of your children attend schools in climates that suggested that the principal decided what was going to be mandatory in the school, whether it was outlined in the curriculum document or not.

Even when phys ed was not compulsory in Ontario, there were quite a number of public and Catholic secondary schools apparently requiring it as a mandatory subject. A lot of that still exists out there, I know.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not know how we will ever ferret that out.

Mr. Gagné: With difficulty.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If everybody is continuing to take it for four years, that might give us an idea of what the actual practice is out there.

Madam Chairman: I know there is a ministry staff person at the back of the room, so perhaps he could add that to the extensive but not necessarily exhaustive list of what Mr. Johnston has asked for to date.

I would very much like to thank the OSSTA–I almost said the OSSTF there for a moment.

Mr. Gagné: I was at a public school dinner the other day and I was introduced as the president of OSSTF, so it is quite all right.

Madam Chairman: I am not sure if you consider that to be a compliment or not, so I think I had better leave it with our sincere appreciation for your contribution to our committee today.

Before members go, I would like to remind you that there was a brief by the National Youth in Care Network that was with your October 3 package. Would you bring that to this afternoon's hearings? It is exhibit 165A and it was given to you October 3.

The committee recessed at 11:40 a.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:15 p.m. in committee room 1.

Madam Chairman: I would like to open this afternoon's session of the select committee on education as we continue our review of the organization of the education process in Ontario. We are pleased to welcome the Ontario Federation of Labour as our first deputation this afternoon. Welcome back to our committee, Dr. Turk. We notice that we must have given you a rough time last time because you have brought an ally with you.

Dr. Turk: I brought the executive vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, who was to come with me the first time but at the last minute was unable to come.

Madam Chairman: Welcome to our committee. You may begin your brief whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Ms. Davis: When we appeared before this committee in July, we identified a number of our major concerns with the education system in Ontario. We asked to have an opportunity to return to talk about what we see as solutions to those problems, and so we are here today, pleased that you have provided us with that opportunity.

Our task has been made easier because many of the essential changes that are necessary have already been identified in the report prepared by George Radwanski for the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward). While there are a number of items in Radwanski's report with which we disagree, we feel that key items in that report provide the kind of blueprint which should guide this committee's recommendations.

There are six interrelated changes that we feel must be made in Ontario's education system:

1. An end to streaming at both the elementary and secondary school levels;

2. A clear differentiation between opportunity and outcome in education and a commitment to the responsibility of the schools to bring all students to a high level of knowledge and skills, regardless of background or initial interest;

3. A core curriculum, applicable to all children, that is designed to ensure that all students have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to function in our society by the time they have completed secondary school.

4. The development of new approaches to teaching and teacher training that will assist teachers in achieving the goals of the educational system;

5. The establishment of better methods to make the education system accountable for meeting its objectives with regard to individual students, as well as the society at large;

6. Finally, integration of the community into the education system.

We will speak first to streaming. The need to eliminate streaming from Ontario's elementary and secondary schools is a prerequisite to any kind of meaningful improvement in the educational system. By streaming, we are referring to the practice of dividing students into instructional groups on the criteria of assumed similarity in ability or attainment. This practice is sometimes referred to as "tracking," "ability grouping" and "homogeneous grouping."

Streaming starts in Ontario in elementary school and is formalized in grade 9. In our view, the damage of streaming is done by the time children are formally streamed in secondary school. The practice is so widespread that it is taken for granted as being an appropriate way to teach, yet the voluminous evidence on streaming does not support this conclusion. Since this evidence has already been brought before you in the submissions of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and the Ontario Federation of Students, among others, we will not do so again.

We do, however, want simply to quote the summary of this evidence in the Radwanski report, and I quote, "The evidence now is overwhelming that streaming is a social injustice, a theoretical error and a practical failure."

He also makes two recommendations regarding streaming. For elementary schools he recommends, "That the practice of homogeneous ability grouping for instruction in any subject be discontinued by all schools in Ontario and, if necessary to achieve this result, that it be expressly prohibited by the Ministry of Education." Then for secondary schools he recommends, "That the current policy of streaming high school students into academic, general and basic courses of study be abolished, and replaced by provision of a single and undifferentiated, high-quality educational stream for all students."

Like us, Radwanski sees the elimination of streaming to be a prerequisite of any fundamental

reform. He argues that doing away with streaming must lie at the heart of any strategy to address the fundamental need for improvements in our education system, to significantly reduce the dropout rate in the long run and to provide meaningful educational outcomes for all our young people. More important, he went on to stress that no recommendation in his report should be regarded as more important.

Eliminating the practice of streaming will be difficult. A good deal of conventional pedagogical wisdom assumes the value of streaming. Most teachers in Ontario have been trained to teach using ability grouping. The entire secondary curriculum is premised on a streamed system. Defenders of streaming use the rhetoric of "meeting each student's individual needs" to justify the practice. In short, much of the educational bureaucracy in Ontario, like elsewhere, is so thoroughly wedded to streaming that its abolition seems unthinkable. The difficulty many had in responding to the Radwanski report was due in part to their shock at his central attack on streaming.

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Streaming must be eliminated from Ontario schools. Whatever the laudable intentions of those who defend streaming, the reality is that streaming has been central to the perpetuation of a class-biased educational system that discriminates against working class and poor children. The fact of class bias, that working class and poor children do significantly worse than children of the well-to-do regardless of their abilities, is not a matter for debate. The empirical evidence is clear on this point.

It does not take a researcher to see the obvious. All you need to do is visit any lower-stream secondary school. Every one is populated almost exclusively with working-class and poor children. Or, on the converse, visit any so-called special education program, other than those for the gifted or the physically disabled and you will find a similar pattern.

I know that a moment ago we promised not to review the research once again. However, we must look at one study to illustrate our point. Careful research carried out by the Toronto Board of Education has shown that working-class children were nine times more likely to be placed in nonphysically disabled special education classes than were middle-class children. Further, middle-class children who happened to be placed in these special education classes were 20 times more likely to get out of them than their working-class counterparts.

If this committee does nothing else, it must demand the elimination of streaming from Ontario schools. The sheer injustice of streaming should persuade you, even if the educational failure of the practice does not.

The focus of the attack on streaming must begin in the elementary years. Unless streaming is eliminated there, it will not make any difference what is done at the high school level. It is equally important to recognize that streaming which occurs within a classroom is every bit as pernicious as streaming which occurs by the division of children into different levels of schools. Of course, the elimination of streaming will require many other changes. We will go on to discuss these in subsequent sections.

Our second point has to do with opportunity and outcome. Our educators have long held equality of opportunity for all children as a goal for our educational system. However laudable that objective, it has been clear for many years that we are failing to achieve it. In practice, this language serves as a cover for class-biased streaming, including many forms of special education. It justifies this streaming through an ideology which says students with a wide range of abilities and backgrounds ought to have the opportunity of getting the best education of which they are capable.

The manifest failure of these class-biased equal opportunity arrangements is clear in the research literature and is clear to anyone who visits such programs.

The fact that socioeconomic status may be the best predictor of one's placement in the streaming system and of one's ultimate educational attainment tells us that the school system is not providing equality of opportunity, but rather reproducing the status positions from which the students come.

We believe that there are real costs as a result of this. Obviously, the student who ends up in a dead-end program loses, as does his or her family. The wider society loses because talents and abilities of the dead-ended students are not developed. Society also loses because a democracy suffers with an ill-informed and alienated citizenry.

Quite frankly, we are troubled by recent attempts to portray the problems of our education system as essentially economic problems linked primarily to the country's competitive position. We need better education for all, we are frequently told, so that we can beat the Germans, the Americans or the Japanese in the world marketplace.

We believe this is a position which largely misses the point about what is happening to workers in our society. With new technology and work organization producing an increasingly pear-shaped distribution of jobs, the great majority requiring less and less skill and a much smaller minority requiring more skill, it is by no means clear we can justify better mass education on economic terms.

Here again, we would draw your attention to George Radwanski's views. In spite of his emphasis on making Canada's economy competitive, "It would...be a grave mistake," he says, "to think that the importance of education in today's world is limited to matters of dollars and cents." He goes on to say, "The effective functioning of our democratic system of government, and hence the overall quality of life enjoyed by all our citizens, depends increasingly on having a knowledgeable and well-educated population."

The justification for a good education for everyone ultimately rests on social, not economic grounds. We must talk about outcome and not opportunity if we are to change the class-based inequality of our present educational system.

The objective of schooling should be that by the completion of high school, every student should have acquired the requisite knowledge and skills to function meaningfully in our society.

Like Radwanski, we find it unacceptable to justify Ontario's present practice of saying that what a child needs to know by the end of high school depends on whether he or she is going to university, community college or directly into the workforce. If anything, students going into the workforce need to have learned more, not less, in high school because that will likely be their last exposure to formal education.

To make a key point explicit, we reject the traditional view of the educational system as a funnel to higher education for some with the rest being left behind as failures. Our commitment to equality of outcome requires a belief that schools can overcome the differences with which children enter the system. Defenders of the status quo often deny this possibility, complaining that schools cannot be expected to make up for the inadequacies of the home and the parents. However, given the enormous resources that we put into our school system, this is an appalling apology for failure. It is also not true.

Schooling can bring all students to a level of adequate education for life in our society. A recent study by Paul Olson at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education speaks clearly to this issue. In a careful ethnography of different classes in different schools, Olson concludes, and again I quote:

"It has been argued that schools cannot compensate for inequalities manifest in the larger society. Certainly such inequalities are powerful barriers to learning outcomes. But to assume that classrooms do not vary in their own success based on how creatively they use their own environments and abilities of teachers to teach is to miss important empirical differences in how classrooms can be places of learning regardless of exogenous factors.

"Spruce Grove"–one site of Olson's research–"is a transfusion of the educational soul precisely because it illustrates how much can be accomplished with skilful, caring teaching even with the most difficult of groups....

"MacDougall"–a second site of Olson's research–"is the practical consequence of a false sense of sophistication that knows what poor and working-class kids can do and tries then to patronizingly 'compensate' for this. But this compensation is never heartfelt. It is, instead, an exercise in determining what should be done for 'other people's children.'

"...by learning what works, by learning to share responsibilities and to integrate levels of curricular practice, a classroom comes together where discipline and failure are not the order of the day."

It is essential that this committee recommend commitment to a goal that all children, by the end of high school, have achieved the knowledge and skills necessary to function meaningfully in our society. It is also essential that you explicitly affirm the ability of schools to achieve this goal.

Core curriculum: It follows necessarily from the foregoing that there must be a core curriculum for all students. A good common education for all children requires centralized curriculum development at the level of the province. We cannot achieve our preceding goal if we leave decision-making about the common core to the local school boards.

The importance of history or math or geography or languages is no different in Windsor or Cornwall or Kenora. And, with our mobile population, a student today in North Bay may be tomorrow living in Toronto or Kitchener or Thunder Bay.

As a province, we should identify what core curriculum we want all children to learn by the time they leave school. We should develop the

curricular materials, pedagogy and teaching and learning conditions so that goal can be achieved.

The decision about the core curriculum will, however, be a matter of some debate. We disagree, for example, with the élitist implications of some of Radwanski's suggested curricular items, but we are in agreement that there must be a core and that the content of that should be determined after wide consultation.

We want to answer the criticism of some who oppose the notion of a core curriculum. Lloyd Dennis counterposes the notion of core curriculum with the view of a school as a place of celebration in which children acquire a passion for learning and can develop to their full potential.

Surely this need not be inconsistent with having a core curriculum. A passion for learning comes from having committed and caring teachers whose own love for learning is transmitted to the students. It also comes from challenging and interesting tasks that are seen as relevant to the children's lives. Neither of these requisites has any necessary relationship to particular courses. The teaching of Shakespeare can be an ordeal of boring irrelevance, or it can be an occasion of excitement and discovery. So can the teaching of auto mechanics, physics or art.

Without a core curriculum, a significant number of children will leave the educational system without the knowledge they will need to participate actively and fully in our society.

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Likewise, we would like to dispel the concern that a provincially set curriculum means there is no role for local input.

Specific reading materials should be relevant to the lives of the learners, a point made well in the brief submitted to you by the Ontario Federation of Students. Equally, teachers' explanations of why various subjects are important should reflect the real world out of which their students come. It is not conducive to learning to use materials or approaches that have no resonance with the students' lives. And lives, we want to stress, can be different in Dryden than in London, and different again in Regent Park in Toronto than in Rosedale a few blocks away.

Our point is that while the subjects and the level of attainment should be set provincially, the materials and the approaches to achieve those goals should have significant local input. In addition, local input regarding pedagogical techniques is a necessary supplement to general pedagogical training that would be common province-wide. Finally, there would have to be significant local determination of the kinds and extent of tutoring programs necessary to help students reach the designated level of attainment.

We feel strongly that the current credit system should be eliminated as part of the move to a common curriculum. Radwanski provides a catalogue of the problems with the credit system in Ontario. However progressive a credit system may seem, we feel it has reactionary consequences. It provides advantages to those students whose parents are more familiar with the education system and can advise their children which courses to take. It pits teachers against each other in attracting good students to optional courses. It works against the provision of breadth and local relevance as necessary features of all courses.

It is our conviction that any formal elimination of streaming would be entirely undone by maintenance of the credit system.

The objectives of variety, relevance and inherent interest to each student can be achieved through the teaching approaches by which a common curriculum is delivered and in the selection of materials to be used. While some optional courses should be available in grades 11 and 12, they should be subordinate to achieving success in the core curriculum.

A core curriculum in which the same students would be together for most subjects provides a partial antidote to the alienation and impersonality that marks high school education under the credit system. It would also increase the likelihood that teachers would get to know their students better and be better able to use the dynamics of the group as part of their teaching approach.

Pedagogy and teacher training: The changes we are proposing have profound pedagogical implications. Since we understand that the committee may have further hearings to deal with the issues of pedagogy, we will reserve most of our remarks for that time. For now, we want simply to point to some key suggestions.

On the one hand, our view of good pedagogy is that which creates a supportive task-oriented environment that is authentically interactive and challenging to children. How to achieve this is a matter of considerable complexity. Certain requisites are clear. There will have to be a significant increase in resources for teachers. The approach to education we are proposing requires a substantial amount of time, good teaching conditions, creative teacher training and interesting and relevant learning materials.

One obvious necessity is a significant reduction in class sizes. This has implications for the numbers of teachers to be trained, the availability of classrooms, etc. To some extent, this reduction could be made easier by the redeployment of many nonclassroom teachers to the classroom.

A second necessity would be the provision of more preparation time for teachers. University teachers are only required to be in the classroom six to nine hours a week because of the recognition of the time it takes to prepare for a class. If anything, we feel that the demands on an elementary or a secondary teacher, attempting to meet the individual needs of 20 to 30 diverse students, is as difficult a task as giving a university lecture. More time must be allotted our teachers to meet the demands we are placing on them.

A third requirement is revised teacher training that equips teachers with the ability to teach effectively without ability grouping. Such techniques are known and used in a variety of schools. These must become a central part of pre-service training and ongoing in-service training.

One particular approach which we feel merits wider use is co-operative learning groups. This approach to teaching breaks up a heterogeneous class of students into interdependent, and still heterogeneous, groups where learning goals link group members. In addition to co-operative task structures, there are co-operative reward structures which encourage students to help each other learn.

There is a wealth of good research material which shows that this approach to learning results in significant gains for all students when compared with traditional, individualized, competitive teaching strategies. The gains are not only in the amount students learn, in their motivation to learn more and in the confidence they acquire, but also in gains in increased empathy for others, in reduced intergroup tension and aggression and in more tolerance of ethnic and racial diversity.

A fourth requirement is increased emphasis on teachers teaching what they know and like. Assigning a physical education teacher to teach mathematics, or an English teacher to teach social studies, goes against what we know about learning. Teachers are best able to motivate students to learn when their own enthusiasm for the subject comes through to the student.

One implication of this requirement is that there should be greater emphasis on training teachers in their own subject, thus shifting the current one-sided focus on methodology. Teachers should also have the opportunity for regular sabbaticals in order to pursue further study in their own subject fields.

While these recommendations have major financial implications, there are even more significant costs to our society associated with the present school system. Ultimately, we are going to have to decide whether we want to put more of our money up front to help create meaningful lives for our students, or whether we want to continue to bear the long-term social and personal costs engendered by the current system.

Accountability: A major concern of many with our educational system is its lack of accountability. How, it is often asked, can a child complete grade 12 without knowing how to read and write? How are we to know if we are getting value for our educational dollar?

A quick and superficial answer is the reintroduction of standardized, province-wide testing. Radwanski, along with many others, adopts this approach. We believe this is a bad idea which would do more harm than good.

The issue of accountability is central to us, but standardized provincial testing will not achieve anything useful for students, teachers or parents. One need only look at the United States to see an education system in which such testing is widely practised and where the problems make ours pale by comparison.

As we surely should have learned from Ontario's historical experience with standardized provincial testing, educational programs are inevitably skewed to doing well on the tests. In its worst form, the entire curriculum is twisted to anticipating what the testers will be asking the students, and nothing else.

While many students may demonstrate knowledge because their teachers are good at guessing what will be on the tests, there is no necessary relationship between the test score and any meaningful learning.

Further, we know that a variety of people do poorly on tests, even when they know the subject. Cultural biases in tests, psychological variations in testing situations and a host of exogenous factors can significantly affect test results in a manner that has no relationship to knowledge of the subject being tested.

While there are no easy answers to the issue of accountability, there are answers. At the level of the individual student, more effort must be put into equipping teachers with the ability and the commitment to communicate a student's progress fully and accurately to parents. This often

requires overcoming parents' intimidation by educational authorities, cultural differences in modes of expression between parents and teachers, and parents' unfamiliarity with educational jargon.

A good teacher has a solid understanding of how each student is doing. We must find ways for that information to be communicated more clearly to those who share responsibility for the student's life. A review of these techniques might be a valuable appendix to this committee's final report. We in the labour movement would be most interested in participating in the creation of such a document.

At the level of the board and the province, there is a host of ways of evaluating how the curriculum is being implemented and whether the objectives of that curriculum are being met.

At a broader level, the education system must be accountable for its goal of adequately educating everyone. We do not need standardized testing of students to realize the failure of the system in this regard. The statistics cited in the debate on streaming make it apparent that the school system is not succeeding in providing a good education for all students, regardless of ethnic, class or racial background.

This level of accountability is relatively easy to measure. The Ministry of Education should draft specific equity goal statements and establish a social audit mechanism to determine on a regular basis whether these equity goals are being met.

Community involvement: While much of the thrust of our recommendations is to strengthen centralized responsibility for education, we believe there is a more active role for the community.

As we recognize the demands our recommendations will be placing on our teachers, we should move to lighten their load by involving the community more actively in fulfilling non-teaching responsibilities, which is currently done by teachers or not done at all.

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The resources of each school's community must be drawn upon to enrich the extracurricular opportunities available to students. Programs must be encouraged to involve local artists, craftspeople, tradespeople, athletes or writers. The resources of the community should be assessed by each school's administration. Teachers should be made aware of these and encouraged to take advantage of the resources in planning their lessons.

This is a very different approach to that found within many of our boards which attempt to substitute volunteers for union labour in essential service activities. I want to make it very clear here that we are not talking about replacing teachers' aides or lunchroom monitors. In most cases, these people are union labour. We are not talking about replacing them with volunteers. Lest there be any doubt at this point, I want to just stress that.

Closer community links also must be promoted by encouragement of more active parent involvement in the school system. Parental involvement must be more than requesting information about one's own child or helping to raise money through the school's fund-raising drive.

Real parent involvement will require leadership from the ministry in the form of support for school-community relations departments in each board. These departments should be charged with getting parents more actively involved. In essence, they would work for the parents. The model could be that of the Toronto board's SCR department before it was dismantled by a hostile board threatened by the real parental involvement that department had helped achieve.

While boards and administrators may want parents to leave the school system to the professionals, the province must make clear that real parental involvement can only strengthen the educational system.

Finally, the link between the community and school must be strengthened by a provincial directive which requires the boards to make school facilities available to nonprofit community groups at no cost. The entire community underwrites the cost of the school. The entire community should have access to school facilities as long as that access does not interfere with regular school functions.

Debates about our educational system generate a good deal of interest because of the importance that system has to our society. We expect it to be a place where children learn to think critically and creatively, learn how to learn and learn to want to learn. On the other hand, we also feel it is a place where children must learn the requisite skills and knowledge to participate fully in our society, at home, at work and in the community.

These two sets of objectives are sometimes seen to be antithetical. They are not. Our educational system has not done terribly well in meeting either of them. While the failure hurts society generally, the brunt of the burden is borne

by working class and poor children who comprise the majority of the cast-offs of the educational system.

By re-examining our purposes and resolving to change practices that have produced our present failings, we can move our system forward. The recommendations of this committee will have a significant impact upon the future.

A reaffirmation of the need to educate everyone well is the starting point for change. Abolition of streaming, introduction of a core curriculum, new approaches to pedagogy and teacher training, better teaching conditions and materials, greater concern for real accountability and an increased role for the community are the prescription for significant improvement.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. I notice Mr. Johnston was fondling this brief again, particularly as you were going through the streaming section. I know he is just delighted to open up the questioning.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am easily excited. You notice the word "entrepreneurship" never came up once. I just wanted to bring that to your attention. I am staying calm as a result.

That is a wonderfully radical brief and I am delighted to see it. In some ways, it is so much more radical than the way Radwanski approaches the whole question of streaming. For that reason, I really welcome it. But it is incredibly challenging for a lot of reasons. I want to ask several questions which I think are begged by what you are asking, which obviously you did not have time to follow up on.

First, we spend more time on outcomes and we are looking for some sort of general notion of outcomes for all students coming through the system to prepare them for life in general. You say you do not want standardized testing and reject that part of Radwanski, which I was glad to see.

You do not deal with an issue, though, that comes out of that, the issue of promotion. In the old days before we had streaming, what happened to kids from working class families was that they were held back. We had sort of standard goals. The middle class kids went on and were brought through. The other kids were held back. Gradually, because of age differentiation, they dropped out of the system.

I recognize that you talk about a lot of things which I would like to come to around co-operative education, pedagogy and that sort of thing, but around the specific issue of promotion, social promotion or grade promotion, how does that fit into your concept of outcomes. You do not deal with that and I presume you have an answer on it.

Dr. Turk: We did not include it in the brief because I do not think we are happy with either extreme in that argument. I know this committee has spent a fair amount of time discussing this issue. I guess we are torn because we feel there are times when, if a child has not learned necessary material, it is important he not move ahead. It is also important to recognize that there are times when even though a child has not learned the material, holding the child back will have more harmful consequences than moving the child forward.

I think it has to be a decision made by the teacher and parents in the best interests of that particular child. So it hard to make firm rules of one extreme or the other. That is why we did not really address it.

Ms. Davis: It is also hard to separate it out from the total approach we are talking about too.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I know. That is why I wanted to have some notion of its inclusion, because as you say, for instance, the credit system can easily be used to replace streaming. In fact, so can the reinstitution of firm grade promotion be the means of holding back working class kids. That is all I am arguing. Therefore, I see it as something that needs to be addressed within the philosophical framework within which you are working. I have difficulties with it too. I am not presuming I have the answer on it.

Dr. Turk: What we are saying our answer is, is that there has to be flexibility for doing either; that is, working class kids have done badly in a system that socially promotes where they have not learned, and they have done badly in a system where they are rigidly held back if they have not met some predetermined set of information.

Certainly, failing by years in secondary school, as we had a long time ago, would not be a smart idea. But at the elementary years, I think it has to be decided on an individual basis as to what is best in the interests of that child, and it can vary. I do not think we have a position, as such, on that issue.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have been receiving some very strong recommendations. The North York board is the best example I can think of. Their own local studies showed that retention tended to create dropouts. Retaining kids even a year–

Ms. Davis: Holding them back.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: –holding them back for a year in the primary level, in the elementary

panel, tended to produce dropouts in the secondary panel. Therefore, for that reason, they were very opposed to it. Do you have a supplementary?

Mr. Keyes: In the very middle of page 15, there is one sentence that rather bothered me. You said, "It is our conviction that any formal elimination of streaming would be entirely undone by maintenance of the credit system." So you do not want any streaming of subject matter and you are not happy with grade or nongrade promotion, but you seem to be totally against a maintenance of the credit system.

It almost leads me to say, where are we? We do not know where we are. You are opposed to it all. I thought the credit system was one of the ways we were getting away from grade promotion retention, because it seems to me to follow some of your plea for a core curriculum in certain areas. You want the core curriculum administered and almost mastered, and yet you say we ought to do away with the credit system, which is a body of knowledge within a subject area which we want children to obtain. You have me confused there. The two arguments are hitting against one another.

Dr. Turk: Your characterization of the credit system strikes me as strange; that is, the core curriculum posits that there is a body of knowledge we want all kids coming through the school system to have, and in that regard our recommendation is very much like Radwanski's, although we may debate with him about what is in that core curriculum.

Mr. Keyes: Your core curriculum certainly covers a wide area of subject matters.

Dr. Turk: Yes, but it is not optional. My understanding of a credit system is a system where you say a child has to complete X number of credits to graduate from high school and can choose–

Mr. Keyes: And 16 of them are–

Dr. Turk: –and 16 of them are required, 14 of them are optional. What we are saying is that when you have that kind of system, the processes by which the selection of options takes place would, in our view, re-introduce streaming. Some kids would be encouraged by their families and others who advise them to take certain kinds of courses, and other kids would be discouraged from taking them.

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What we see to be a central problem and one that has not been asked yet, although you may be planning to ask it, is how within 10 or 11 years a child can learn the core curriculum; that is, what we feel an educated person in our society needs. We really do not see that there is all this optional time for a child to take things other than what is in a broad core curriculum. We cannot imagine how there would be much time. That is why we talk about options occurring in grades 11 and 12. Our notion of a core curriculum is very broad and suggests that all children should learn this breadth of material. That probably will take virtually all their educational time through grade 10.

Mr. Keyes: I do not want to take up your time, Mr. Johnston, but it sounds as if you would then end up with a system where everything was compulsory, that all subjects were compulsory in the core curriculum. There would not be any option for people to follow the bent of their particular desires, such as it is a poor person from the working class who has a great bent for art or music. They would not be allowed to follow that if your stricture of a core curriculum were followed. Maybe we will get into those in my time, not Mr. Johnston's. That central part of your whole presentation bothers me.

Ms. Davis: Except that those subjects could be part of the core curriculum. I remember that my daughter, in grade 10, took a course called creative thinking. It seems to me that is what the educational system is all about. You should not have to take a course in creative thinking. But that is what happens when you open it wide up.

Mr. Keyes: There should be much more of it done. I think it should be–

Ms. Davis: Creative thinking as it relates to each of the topics.

Mr. Keyes: Or just thinking.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just start with thinking first, then we will move to creative thinking after.

Mr. Mahoney: We would need to stream, though.

Mr. Miclash: And he needs the full 10 years.

Ms. Davis: Once we get the education system overhauled we will talk about the political system.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think you are continually running into troubles defining what a term means. The notion that "credit" needs to mean "optional" does not necessarily follow. What it does is allow a way out of the stricture of grade promotion, which is to say, in the old days, if you failed one class, then you go back and do the whole year over.

At least, credit allows the notion: "You have these five components out of six. That is pretty good. Next year, we'll go back and work on that sixth one, but we'll do these others." Rather than my extending the debate on that, I think there our use of the language can be–

Dr. Turk: I think your clarification is part one. We are talking about credit system here, we are talking about optional credits. We are not talking about breaking down the year into a number of subjects, all of which would be core.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Mr. Keyes will probably want to follow up on the basis of what the core is and what the credit is. If you want to get kids excited about an area–that is how they learn, because they are excited about an area–if you restrict the core, then how do you do that?

Another problem of language we come up with continually is the definition of streaming, of course, and you are defining it in terms of tracking, being equal to streaming, etc.

Accepting that for a moment, the presumption you are making is so radical, about the total heterogeneity of methodology, that each grouping you have must be heterogeneous, that I do not even think that meets the reality of what is often happening in co-operative learning in Ontario today.

Often co-operative learning groupings are not based on heterogeneous groups, but on things that range between ability-grouping cliques and heterogeneous groupings. Even within the most progressive group of teachers who are doing that kind of work in the elementary panel, they have not gone the full way you are talking about.

Almost everybody who has approached us has said that when they use that–they consider themselves to be destreamed–they look at ability grouping as one of several means of grouping kids within the heterogeneous subgroupings within a class. The groupings may change from day to day, but from time to time, in fact, you may have it by ability level within the class.

You seem to be rejecting even that notion as being the thin edge of the wedge towards the total streaming of the working class child. It just seems so far from what we are doing at the moment that I am wondering how we ever make that step you are talking about.

Dr. Turk: Clearly what we are talking about is very different from current practice in Ontario. You are quite right. Whether it is as radical as you suggest–I mean, it is radical in that it is different, but our reading of a lot of the research literature suggests there is very little empirical justification for ability grouping, that one is hard pressed to show that children learn better or more, that either the children who are having difficulty in a subject or the students who are "gifted" learn better in an ability group situation.

So while it may differ from current practice–in fact, we allude to that–we say it is very hard to find a nonstreamed classroom in this province. One cannot find much justification for that prevalent practice in the research literature. It is not like some wild, hare-brained idea.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, no, I was not saying that.

Dr. Turk: No, I know you are not saying that, but I want to make that clear because the word "radical" conjures up various images. We think it is an idea that just does not have much justification. If people refer to co-operative learning situations as ones in which there is ability grouping, then I do not think they are using the term "co-operative learning" properly, because the model for co-operative learning is premised on heterogeneous groupings, both at the class level and within a class in the various smaller groups within the classroom, and draws on the differential abilities of kids around a particular subject area as part of the dynamic for the group that the teacher uses and the students use with each other. It is premised on heterogeneous grouping, so it is almost contradictory to talk about co-operative learning with ability grouping.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: May I ask another short one? If I might, there are a number of areas I would love to follow up. There was the role of special education within all of this as well, but I am delighted to see you put in equity goals, which gives me the language I wanted for my moves in terms of changing the goals of education.

But one of the issues that has come up lately in my own thinking around this is that, behind what you are saying around accountability as well as in terms of pedagogy is a massively different school within our social structure than we have presently, and especially when you set social goals for it other than the individualist ones we have at the moment.

I was saying this to somebody the other day, and he said, "Yes, in fact, I think that the school needs to be looked at structurally in fundamentally different ways and that we should think that this is the one place where, for 12 or 13 years, a child is seen on a daily basis for most of the year and is trapped, in that sense, in his development for a period of time; and that all social agencies that interact with kids at some time or other

during their lives should, in fact, be geared through the school instead of out there in the community in general, and those resources need to be brought back in."

The example was raised of public health nurses, who have been extracted from the school system in the past and need to be reintroduced, but basically, saying that you will never deal with the problems of inner-city schools specifically–or most schools–if those resources are not brought into the physical buildings and the buildings are not changed dramatically. What is your thought about that?

There are those who would argue that any change in pedagogy will not really affect working-class kids, whose parents are less involved, perhaps, in their education than yuppies are, that you really need to put in those other kinds of resources and that maybe changing the notion of a school would be a key way of doing it.

Ms. Davis: Yes, and particularly in the inner city; it is the point that you make. To a limited extent, we could see that being a useful–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Adjunct?

Ms. Davis: –adjunct, yes.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Johnston. Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I noted that you did not directly use the word "entrepreneur," but I also note on page 8, when you talk about beating the Germans, Americans and Japanese in the world's marketplace, that if you read between the lines, the implication is that there is a certain amount of entrepreneurship, Richard.

Ms. Davis: We are saying that that is not what education should be for.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have got to finish those sentences.

Mr. Mahoney: No, you do not. It all depends on the point you want to make. You know that.

Ms. Davis: If you are reading that into it, you are reading it wrong.

Mr. Mahoney: I was not reading that into it. By the way, I thought, and this is perhaps semantic, that the statement was more that we would be able to compete in the global marketplace rather than the connotation of beating another country at something. I do not think that is the intent of the Premier's Council report. However, that is more a personal opinion of mine and not really the subject of what we are about.

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I am more interested in what appears to me to be a contradiction. You say eliminate streaming, and yet you refer to the core curriculums being adjusted at the local levels and you use the examples of things being different in Dryden from what they are in London and different in Regent Park from what they are in Rosedale, and I quite agree. If you, in fact, wind up adjusting your core curriculum to accommodate those changes, are you not, in effect, streaming the kids in those areas through your core curriculum?

Ms. Davis: You are talking about developing materials that are relevant to the children in different parts of the province or different parts of the city, not the subjects themselves but the materials that are used to teach the subjects; so we do not necessarily agree with you.

Mr. Mahoney: You go on later to say that you want to split the kids into co-operative learning groups. Are we really just playing around with a system here with these recommendations? I say it very respectfully because I know you have done a lot of work and submitted a very thoughtful brief that is going to give us a lot of things to think about, and I appreciate that, but I see you eliminating streaming, eliminating optional credits, establishing a core curriculum, adjusting that curriculum to be of interest to the kids in a particular area and then putting those kids in co-operative learning groups. If that is not streaming, I do not know what is.

Dr. Turk: It most assuredly is not streaming. Let me try to amplify what Julie said.

Some people who talk about the relevance of materials, including some people who have appeared before this committee, make a very good point about the necessity of materials being relevant to kids' lives, so that if you talk in a course about various agricultural implements, kids who have been born and raised in downtown Toronto may not know what you are talking about and the point of the lesson is lost. If you take the relevance issue too far, so that you teach working-class things to working-class kids, then you can create the problem you are talking about.

What we are trying to do is say that we want a core curriculum; that is, all kids who come through our high school should know world history and geography, Canadian history, English or French and so forth. Some of the materials used to deliver that core curriculum can reflect and make reference to things that the kids in that particular school, in that particular community, will know and understand. That is, there are ways to teach about math where you

would use different examples in teaching on a Cree reserve in northern Ontario than you would use in Rosedale or you might use in Regent Park. The goals of learning how to add, subtract, multiply and divide and the levels of achievement would be the same, but the examples and materials you would use so that the children understood the concepts you were trying to get to may well vary. It seems to me that that is not a reintroduction of streaming at all, that one can recognize local differences but hold the same goals and same level of achievement out for everyone.

Ms. Davis: A Dick and Jane reader would not be terribly appropriate on a Cree reservation in northern Ontario. It might be in Rosedale, but it certainly would not be in other parts of the province.

Mr. Mahoney: But you are really using two very large extremes. A Dick and Jane reader would be appropriate in Regent Park, just as it would be in Rosedale.

Ms. Davis: I would argue that it would not. It would not reflect the day-to-day reality of the majority of children in Regent Park.

Mr. Mahoney: I just wonder, though: The concept of the core curriculum, which is really another way of saying, "Teach the basics"–

Dr. Turk: It depends what you mean by basics. A lot of people who talk "back to the basics" have a very narrow version of basics. We do not.

Mr. Mahoney: But if you are to teach a certain core curriculum to establish certain abilities at various levels, whether it be up to grade 3, grade 6, grade 8, whatever, you establish a philosophy that you are trying to equip kids with certain tools as they go through that should be standard if you eliminate streaming. It would seem to me that teaching styles would be of more concern to the differences between Regent Park and Rosedale. I do not like that example, but it is one you have used.

It would seem to me that the difference in teaching styles would be more appropriate and then allow for certain optional subjects to be made available that might be of more interest to the kids in Mississauga than it would be to the kids in Ottawa or wherever it happens to be. I just would be concerned that if we were to establish a core curriculum and then let people monkey around with it all around the province, we would have a terrible problem maintaining any level of standards; whereas more in-service teacher training on how to deal with particular social problems, on how to deal with particular learning groups, would make more sense than adjusting cores all over the place.

Dr. Turk: I am not sure we have a difference, and either we are misunderstanding you or you are misunderstanding us. When we talk about a core curriculum and having a body of knowledge that we want all children to learn, we make reference to where there can be local input in this more centralized decision-making, and we make reference to pedagogical techniques and approaches, although one could argue at another level that good teaching is the same anywhere. I mean, where a teacher conveys his or her love for the subject and interest in learning and the child picks that up, it does not vary, although there are a variety of techniques.

Similarly, if you are trying to teach somebody to read, write or learn math or learn science, you can do that in a whole variety of different ways. Any good teacher adapts how he does that to his student body, and that is all we are saying, that there is flexibility. Even though you have the same goal of a certain level of reading or a certain understanding of geometry or learning about Canadian history, one can approach that in many different ways without undercutting the notion of a core curriculum, without undercutting the higher-level objectives that you have across the province. I think that kind of flexibility is essential for the program to be meaningful. I would think any good teacher, even if you do not allow a good teacher that flexibility, is going to take it because you cannot teach well unless you take it.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess the way you have just explained it would seem to me to be substantially less radical surgery than what your brief proposes.

Dr. Turk: Except that we do not have a core curriculum in this province at the moment.

Mr. Mahoney: No, I know, but your–

Dr. Turk: We do not have any notion that all kids coming out of high school should have a certain body of knowledge.

Mr. Mahoney: I do not want to get into an argumentative situation.

Ms. Davis: What he is saying is exactly our presentation. That is, in fact, the intent and the approach that we are taking.

Mr. Mahoney: Okay. Let me go on, then, and just ask one other thing. You use the comparison of a university professor to an elementary or secondary school teacher. If you are to establish a core curriculum and if you are to accept the

premise that we establish a core curriculum without options, that it is laid out and there are various teaching methods that are taught in service throughout various areas of the province to deliver that core curriculum to those kids so that it is relevant to those kids, how can you compare that to a university lecturer? Obviously, the research involved as time goes on– I mean, read some of the articles about the size of the class we are speaking to these days. But it just seems to me to be an apple and an orange.

Ms. Davis: Dr. Turk, before he came to work for us, was a university professor.

Dr. Turk: At the risk of offending my colleagues across the road, where I taught for 15 years, I can assure you that the difficulty in my classes of lecturing to 350 students and preparing those lectures was probably much less than the difficulty of my child's kindergarten teacher in coping with the diverse needs of the 25 students in her class.

I am not trying to suggest the teacher should teach six or eight or nine hours a week, as I had to do at the University of Toronto, but I am saying that by the fact that you have a core curriculum, that you are trying to deliver to 25 kids, especially in a heterogeneous class–that is, kids with different abilities, different interests–trying to find teaching techniques to bring them all up to a certain level, you are putting an enormous amount of work on the elementary or secondary teacher to achieve that goal, and I think it is almost a heroic effort on their part to do that.

I would much rather be a university lecturer and I find it a much easier job, to tell you the truth, than to be an elementary school teacher in the city. The work is different. When I was doing that, I would get to sit and read in the library and prepare my lectures. I really did not have to worry about whether my students were learning all that much. I gave the lecture and they passed or failed the course. What we are asking teachers to do here is to take a very real responsibility for a very diverse group of kids and bring them up to a certain standard, and I think that is an enormous job.

Mr. Mahoney: Thanks very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mahoney. Mr. Keyes, did you have another question in addition to your supplementary?

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Mr. Keyes: I wanted to; I know the time is very short. There were three or four of them. You make no reference at all in your brief to one of the topics, semestering. I thought probably you had relegated it out simply because the other problems of the core curriculum seem to be uppermost in your minds. You made no reference to anything to do with the role of technical education in high schools today as well, so I felt that maybe that had been relegated, all in this interest of core curriculum.

Give me a little more idea of your core curriculum. I thought the exercise was good. In fact, I want to say it in very positive terms. I thought what you have done was a very imaginative exercise in preparing the brief. But you talk about core curriculum, so I would like to know what you see as the number of years in the child's education, what are the components of the core curriculum.

In one spot on page 15 you did give some suggestion that would kind of fall in line with one of the things I have been talking about. Maybe you see school as having a point where you graduate from high school at grade 10 at the age of 16, which was always, for some reason, the legal age or compulsory school age. Maybe you need to enhance the core curriculum of everyone to that point if you still want to use the old term of grade 10 or X number of courses and then be free to leave and get into the working world.

You do say there might be some optional courses once you get into grades 11 and 12. You have also said that maybe there should not be any streaming, but once you get to grades 11 and 12, optional courses might not be officially streamed but would be by the nature of what is in them.

So give us a little bit more on your core curriculum and look at this other concept of how long your school would function before you got your graduation or diploma–or which would it be?

Ms. Davis: You mean in terms of subjects that would be included in our curriculum?

Mr. Keyes: Yes. What am I going to teach? I may want to go back.

Ms. Davis: The basic stuff, English, math, world history, Canadian history, economics, geography, physics, for a start.

Mr. Keyes: And you are looking at the gamut from elementary to secondary school. You see, the more you talk that way then the more I look at your saying that maybe we end at grade 10 graduation and it has been core curriculum to that point. Then we kind of give them an opportunity to graduate with all the glory of a graduation. We have heard people talk about how traumatic it is to have people leaving grade 10 at the moment because of the lack of priority given to that certificate, but maybe that is what you are

thinking of and then the years beyond that are higher education.

Ms. Davis: No.

Dr. Turk: The point at which we can say that a child has achieved what we feel every child should achieve from the education system is not one we can identify for this committee. That is a collective decision that would have to be made, whether by grade 10, which in fact is the pattern found in a number of eastern European countries which have that model. They bring kids up to grade 10, and then after grade 10, if they are going to go on into science, a technical field or the social sciences, they make the choice at that point, but everyone is brought to this certain level. Concerning whether we can do that in grade 10, as I read that literature, they are finding that 10 years is not enough, that they need to maybe go on to 11 or even 12.

There is no clear-cut answer to your question at what point we can do that. It depends on how much we build into that core curriculum and how seriously we take the objective of bringing everyone up to it. But somewhere there is a notion of what an educated person is, and we try to achieve that for everyone and then start building in options for people. We are not agreeing or disagreeing with the grade 10 level as the point of doing it, but the notion that you come to this point and then choose and go where you want is one that we are basically comfortable with.

Mr. Keyes: Would you not, under that core curriculum, still have some benchmarks along the way, from entry to school?

Dr. Turk: Absolutely. In other words, what you talk about is that every grade level in the elementary years, you start having benchmarks or a sense of what you want to achieve in different subject areas for the children and you work from that, so it requires a great deal of specification.

Mr. Keyes: So you are still pretty well retaining grade promotion as a concept there, though.

Dr. Turk: I do not think that is necessarily identical to grade promotion. How you handle a child who has not achieved your benchmark in grade 1, if you have a common benchmark, does not mean you necessarily fail everybody who does not achieve that. We know that children do not all learn at the same rate and in the same order. As we said earlier, I do not think there should be a firm rule on that. It should be the interest of that particular child and that child's learning that should guide the decision of whether the child is held back or promoted. I do not think there should be a rule that you automatically socially promote or you automatically hold back.

It is a decision that should be made in the interest of the child, which has to do with a number of factors. A child whose birthday is in December and who is the youngest in his or her class in grade 1 may be helped by being held back when he or she is obviously having difficulty. An older child or any child may, for a variety of other reasons, be desperately harmed by being held back. I think we do not feel comfortable with a very hard and fast rule.

Mr. Keyes: Do you want to give me any comment on this? It is not because you are here representing the OFL; I have asked the question of many groups. What do you see as the role of technical studies? Nothing you have talked about in core curriculum has done anything to touch on that.

Why do you, to be argumentative, feel that a course in geography or Canadian history is more significant to the person in the high school level than perhaps some of the type of technical studies that are certainly available? I have a very soft spot for those.

Ms. Davis: We addressed this in our first brief.

Dr. Turk: We argue that there is–

Mr. Keyes: After 185 of them, it all gets lost.

Dr. Turk: I am sure. I am amazed you are not all comatose at this point, to be honest. That is the disadvantage of coming at the end.

We felt there has to be an integration of "practical and theoretical" learning all the way along. We think what is called technical should be built into everybody's learning experience through the curriculum. We should not say that technical things are what some kids do in grades 9 or 10 or whatever.

But by building in, when you are doing science, there is a whole variety of what are called technical or practical things that should be in all science courses so that all children have the experience of hands-on learning as well as theoretical learning, whether it be in science or math.

In the elementary years, there is a lot of practice with that, a lot of manipulation of things and a physical side to it which is not carried on in later years where people either go an academic route, where their hands are never sullied by touching anything except a pencil and paper, and

others are put into a vocational or technical program. We think the two should be married for everybody.

Madam Chairman: I find the dialogue has been so stimulating that I just cannot resist asking you one more question before you leave. It has to do with streaming. Quite frankly, I find it a little difficult to accept your premise that streaming is the root of all evil and that destreaming is going to solve the problem, which is definitely the impression I got when you came out so strongly about destreaming.

It seems to me that you are not looking at the disadvantages that some of these poorer children are suffering from when they come into the education system. For instance, they may not have had the same degree of parental involvement. The parents may be busy trying to survive, let alone trying to make sure their child is at a level playing field when they reach the education system.

They may not have the money to buy educational toys, to take them to the library, to buy books for them and those types of things. Yet it seems to me that by focusing the problem on streaming, you are ignoring the fact that these children are very disadvantaged when they come into the system and that you are asking education to be all things to all people, to take all the burdens of the parent on its shoulders. I find it difficult.

Ms. Davis: What we are saying is that you should not blame the victims. Those children are victims of circumstances beyond their control. In fact, all the things you just said make the argument for why there should not be streaming, as far as we are concerned, as well as the argument for heterogeneous groupings, because those children will learn from other children who have had exactly the advantages that they have not had. To do anything other than that is really to blame the victims, which these children really are.

Madam Chairman: I guess where I see the difficulty is that you are saying the rorogeneous groupings, because those children will learn from other children who have had exactly the advantages that they have not had. To do anything other than that is really to blame the victims, which these children really are.

Madam Chairman: I guess where I see the difficulty is that you are saying the root of the problem is in the streaming, rather than some of the things that went on before and that have not been rectified before they get to the education system.

Ms. Davis: Streaming just perpetuates those problems and should not.

Dr. Turk: The educational system for the last 20 years, at least in this province, has been motivated by the very serious and legitimate concern that you express. What we have learned in that 20 years is that the streaming system to deal with those problems is an absolute failure. Those kids who come in disadvantaged end up as dropouts and end up in the lower stream. The school system has failed miserably in equalizing the differences. I do not know what percentage of our budget in Ontario we put into education, but next to health, I think it is the biggest single sector.

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Mr. Keyes: Third. The Ministry of Community and Social Services is second.

Dr. Turk: Third. For that enormous amount, we should be doing better than perpetuating the differences that kids come into the school system with. However, seriously well-intentioned educators wanted to get rid of these problems by introducing streams so more attention could be given to kids who have more problems and so on. What has happened–and it is not a theoretical debate any more, it is an empirical fact–is that we have merely reproduced the differences kids have as they enter. The best predictor of where somebody is going to come out of the school system is the level at which he come in.

What we are saying is that streaming has been central to that happening. Getting rid of streaming does not solve all our problems, but it is a precondition to changes. If you do not get rid of streaming–we do not mean at grade 9, we are talking about ability grouping in elementary school–the other changes you make will not have the effects you want.

Ms. Davis: Maybe the Ministry of Community and Social Services budget would not be so large if we did what we should be doing in the education system.

Mrs. O'Neill: Actually, we are not totally sure that the figure Mr. Keyes mentioned is correct.

Ms. Davis: It does not matter where it is. It probably would not be nearly as high if we were doing a better job in the education system.

Madam Chairman: I think the one point we can agree on, though, is that if we put more resources into helping those children reach a level playing field before they even get to the education system, it would certainly be of benefit to them.

Ms. Davis: No debate about that.

Dr. Turk: The provision of universal child care would do more to achieve that than probably any other change you could suggest—another point of agreement with Radwanski.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Dianne remembers coming before a committee to document it. For non profit, wasn't it Dianne?

Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston knows of my own radical tendencies for child care.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Almost all washed away now after your appointment to the chair.

Madam Chairman: Oh, I think my radical tendencies will be with us for a while. Anyway, I would very much like to thank you for your contribution to our committee today.

If I can find my agenda, the next group to appear before us is the Black Creek Foundation. Professor John Buttrick, could you come forward, please. Welcome to our committee, Professor Buttrick. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation time, which we hope will allow ample time for members' questions at the end.

DR. JOHN BUTTRICK

Dr. Buttrick: Thank you. That is what I will do. I am a university teacher rather than a high school or elementary school teacher, so I do not know very much about the inside of an elementary school or secondary school classroom, except what I can remember from when I went, so I cannot talk to you about that.

The reason I wrote this report was that about a decade ago I got interested in the economics of education as it expressed itself here in Toronto, and wrote a big report for the Ontario Economic Council entitled Who Goes to University from Toronto. It was an attempt to describe the characteristics of the students who went and the students who did not go. A couple of years ago I decided I would follow it up to see what happened to those schools that were particularly good or particularly bad at putting kids into university, to discover that in the meantime the province or the Ministry of Education, in its wisdom, had denied access to the necessary data. This sort of aggravated me.

As soon as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act was passed, I requested data by schools on the number of diplomas issued. Other data that were at one time available are no longer available, such as the scholastic aptitude scores of the kids and the grades given by the teachers and so on, so that you could not do a lot of things that were once possible. But it seemed to me that at least the diploma rate by school should be of some interest in identifying those schools that were good and those that were poor at putting kids into university, and I could then compare with what was the case before.

It turned out there was almost no change, of course. The schools that were once good were still good, and the schools that were poor were still poor, with one or two exceptions. Then I read this Radwanski report. The Radwanski report astonished me. By implication, he is talking about dropouts as if they occurred sort of scattered throughout the secondary years. Maybe one would think, looking at that report without perhaps reading it too closely, this must happen at age 16 or something.

It turns out that is totally false. The vast majority of dropouts occur after the child has already registered in grade 12. You would not register in grade 12, since then you are older than 16, unless you wanted a diploma. So what we are talking about is a situation in Ontario where "dropouts" is the wrong expression to use. You should say "forced-outs." The school is throwing these kids out. They are not dropping out voluntarily in the sense that it is way before grade 12.

When you look at grade 13—what used to be grade 13 and is now the advanced six subjects that get them into university—the situation is not good. As a matter of fact, it is about the same as it has always been. That came to me as sort of a surprise because I have looked at this thing before and now, and the wealth and income of the province have gone up, per capita income in particular. In other countries, as per capita income goes up, the percentage going to university automatically increases. More families are able to afford it. More families are able to provide the sort of background the kids need so that this will happen. It is not happening here.

One thing to look for from my report is simply the data. You did not have decent data, I do not think, because people were not using the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to obtain it. I did not do this for the whole province. I did it for just the boroughs of Toronto. Since I am just working by myself, it is a lot of work, but other people could do it for any part of the province they wanted to and find out how the different schools are in fact performing.

In the back here, particularly for the city of Toronto schools, where other data besides the diploma rate are available, in particular the inner-city characteristics of the school, you get

some quite interesting differences among schools. Clearly, it is not true from those data that if you are in a poor neighbourhood you are really stuck, you cannot get those kids to do any better, they cannot conceivably prepare for university and so on–not because of the school, because of the background. That is clearly false. You have a school, Parkdale Collegiate Institute, that is doing a magnificent job. Eastern High School of Commerce is not doing that badly. They are in quite poor neighbourhoods. At one time, incidentally, Parkdale was poor. It has improved immensely. That is the gist of the report.

My aim, of course, is to get Ontario, and if not Ontario, at least Toronto, to prepare a far larger percentage of the kids for university. I think we are doing a miserable job. The worst comparison you could possibly make is between males in Japan and males in Toronto. There, 40 per cent of the male labour force has a university degree, four-year or better. Here it is 13 per cent. That is a shocking difference to me. Somebody earlier was talking about competition internationally. You cannot manage it with such a small percentage of kids having gone to university.

It is not as if people did not want to. From the data I have here assembled, as well as from other material of course–probably you know more about it than I do–the percentage of people who seem to wish to go to university is going up. So is the percentage going into private schools. The only reason you go, primarily, is to get your kid into university. It is the same for the percentage who stay on in school longer, the percentage who go into grade 12 and the percentage who, having completed grade 12, try to aim for–before we stopped grade 13–grade 13, and now of course the six advanced subjects. It is same thing.

There is a tremendous pressure in that direction. It seems to me, if anything, that the schools are damning it. They are not encouraging it. I find that shocking. That is the message I come to you with.

I am not enough of an expert in the schools to know precisely what to do. I do think that streaming in the sense of by school is perhaps not a great idea. I do not see why these basic schools need exist. Why not have all different streams available in a much higher percentage of schools if not in almost all schools? To put a kid in a school where he cannot conceivably prepare for university seems to me sort of a mistake.

I was shocked in some of the poor neighbourhoods of Toronto, when I did those earlier studies and the data were available, to discover that the correlation between the grades the teachers assigned to students and what the students themselves achieved on a scholastic aptitude test was really low. In one case, it was negative–thank goodness, not significantly–which means that the smarter the kids on the scholastic aptitude test, the lower the marks the teachers gave them.

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It is my impression that may still be true, although I have no data any more and I do not think anybody can get them any more. I see no reason to suppose that has changed that much. From some of the Goldfarb stuff that Radwanski cited, it looks as though some of the teachers in at least some schools–I do not know which–do not care very much about the kids.

That may be changed if you do not stream by school. I do not care about other sorts of streaming, but it should not be the entire student body of a school so that there is no mingling, even in a cafeteria, a physical education class, a vocational class or whatever, among kids of different sorts.

I guess that is the main message.

What is there to do about these things? As an economist–as most of you know, economists tend to make remarks that nobody will accept; maybe that is a wise thing–I would argue for more competition among schools, based in part on providing information publicly about how well the different schools are doing, not by student but by school. You know, "The average for this school is lousy; the average for this school is terrific." That ought to put on pressure. Parents will try to move their kids; the kids will try to move. They will not be able to do so because there is no room, and then there will be a lot of pressure on the schools that are not performing too well.

That sort of thing is now done in Buffalo and Minneapolis, two places I know of. One might investigate there to see how it goes, to see if it has the sort of consequences I am suggesting it might have.

I am not sure I would even keep the honours diploma. It may be that it causes so much difficulty that it might be better to get rid of it and find some other way to establish eligibility for university. At present, it is a little bit strange. You just pick up six subjects.

I know what happened when the province-wide exams were dropped, both with reference to the percentage of kids who completed successfully the then grade 13 and the percentage of kids who got Ontario scholarships. They shot up in

the private schools and the rich neighbourhoods as soon as the province-wide exams stopped. It did not make any difference to speak of in the poorer neighbourhoods.

Maybe it would be better to let the universities decide on the basis of entry exams. That is what is done in Japan. It does not matter where you went to school, you better damned well tutor; otherwise, you will not pass the entry exams. At the University of Tokyo, perhaps one of the best universities in the world, they have three entry exams–it does not matter what you are going to study–math, English and Japanese. These are for kids who may decide they are going to study Russian or art history or whatever. The level of math is about second-year university calculus.

To show what can be done in math, just look at the results of the recent international comparative study of schools across countries. It is a tight distribution. It is not a spread-out distribution. In Japan, the average grade 12 kid knows more than the grade 15 kid in Toronto in math. It is a remarkable difference.

One wonders what we could learn about how to teach by looking at the schools in some countries that seem to be doing substantially better in terms of that international study. An earlier study, for example, showed that Hungary was one standard deviation above the world average on teaching science. Maybe we could learn how to teach science by looking at how Hungary does it. Maybe another country is terrifically good at this or that. I would advocate going in that direction.

That is enough. I have talked too much.

Madam Chairman: I hope you have not quite finished talking yet, because I am sure we will have some questions. We will start with Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you. This is a very interesting brief.

I would like to build on your last point with respect to what happened with university entrance exams and so on. It is my understanding that a lot of Ontario universities already have an informal rating system of secondary schools and systems.

Dr. Buttrick: Yes. Toronto has a list, for example.

Mr. Jackson: As does McMaster, the one I am most familiar with. How familiar are you with that process and what are your thoughts on that process?

Dr. Buttrick: It is quite informal. You will not get the universities to admit publicly that they are doing it, nor to give you their lists. From here, for at least the Toronto schools, you can make your own list, if you would like. It is not hard. As a matter of fact, you could just look at the rich neighbourhoods and name the schools that are located therein, you will just about do it.

Some of them, of course, accelerate the kids and have been doing so for a long time. York Mills Collegiate Institute has been hitting–I think about 20 per cent of the kids skip and that is a pretty good school. Of course, North Toronto Collegiate Institute is well-known, and so on and so on. The only oddity about North Toronto I know of is that there are special spaces reserved in it for kids who come from the Forest Hill neighbourhood but do not want to go to the Forest Hill schools, which I think is a little bit surprising.

There are also oddities that I picked up by looking at this stuff, but I am no expert, so you should stay away from me in those respects.

To do some of that stuff by school is really hard because of these very low correlations in many of the poor neighbourhood schools. By low, I mean running around 0.3 or 0.26; things like that. In richer neighbourhoods, you are likely to hit it up around 0.6. It is hard to get any school hitting better than 0.6 per cent. That is not great, but it is not bad. You would like to have, what, a 0.8 correlation between the performance of the kids on a standardized scholastic aptitude test and how their teacher grades them?

It may be that the fact the teacher's grading is low means the kid is not performing well, but that, to me, is a sign that a school is not doing a good job. Those scholastic aptitude tests are, generally speaking, biased towards the middle classes, so if a kid in a poor school does well on them but the teacher marks him down, probably the kid was a troublemaker and could not stand the school–maybe for good reason–but it does not mean the kid was not smart.

That is a big problem for any university admission, to get these kids. As you know, in some countries they just use a standard exam; for example, as I just mentioned, Japan. In the United States, that outfit in Princeton is sort of getting a minor monopoly on these tests. If a kid does very well on their scholastic aptitude test and the high school does not give the kid such a great mark, they will none the less admit the kid and maybe do a little remedial work or something.

Mr. Jackson: I do not know the answer, but I can speak from experience when I suggest to you that we experienced a similar situation with the

Halton Board of Education. As trustees, we were privy to scoring tests between schools, so we could rate our schools. There was always a reluctance to deal with the socioeconomic issue, because the principals and superintendents were nervous about ever letting out publicly that one school was performing better than another.

Dr. Buttrick: Invidious comparison; dangerous.

Mr. Jackson: I realize that. You have identified the problem and you have done extensive research, but you offer us limited recommendations or solutions.

Dr. Buttrick: That is right.

Mr. Jackson: You are comfortable leaving it at that, are you?

Dr. Buttrick: At least I have two. I cannot say I feel tremendously confident in them, but reasonably confident.

To stream a whole school I think may be a mistake; it probably is. In fact, I would argue that it is. I do not know whether I could find data to support that. You cannot find data if schools have done the same thing. A friend of mine went down to Venezuela. As an economist, he asked to talk about education down there, and came back home. He could not find any rich kids who had not got on in school and he could not find any poor kids who had, so there was no way he could do any research of consequence, and of course that is always a problem.

Mr. Keyes: Just following up on that, do I gather you really would believe, that you would support province-wide standardized testing?

Dr. Buttrick: Yes, sure.

Mr. Keyes: In other words, so that every school can be definitely ranked and the university may or may not then need admission testing and so on.

Dr. Buttrick: At least it would tell them how these different schools are going. I certainly would not propose these scores be released on an individual student basis, because that can be damaging to the kid. A bad day or all sorts of things can throw that off. But why not on a school-wide basis? Certainly from the stuff that I have, why is a diploma rate by school not made public?

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Mr. Keyes: Diploma rank, did you say?

Dr. Buttrick: No, the rate, the percentage of kids, say in grade 12 in September who get a diploma at the end of the year. Currently, you can get that only with the help of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Until that was passed, you could not get it for the last decade. That is strange.

Mr. Keyes: With the issue of the number of flaws that are in the system, where do you, as an economist, think the best investment of additional dollars or changes should take place in the system? Did you prioritize some of your ideas in your mind as you looked at the problem?

Dr. Buttrick: I have not looked at it in exactly that way.

Mr. Keyes: What we are looking to do is always from a standpoint of economics. With the limitation of finite dollars, where do you make an investment of those dollars you have that will make what would be considered to be the best changes?

Dr. Buttrick: Probably I am hampered, the way all of us are, by my own education and my own job. I am more interested, I guess, in preparing kids for university. That means I would not be so interested in what I would view as frills. I suppose you would have to call me a hard-liner, in that I would like the kids to learn two languages, English and another language, and math. That would be the main thing, but I think they should have history, and I do not really care about the rest. I certainly would not have them learn economics. It is going to be poorly taught and they will be taught the wrong things as likely as not. Geography is not too bad; there is a lot of memory work there.

Mr. Keyes: So it would be a more back-to-the-basics approach?

Dr. Buttrick: Yes, it would be.

Mr. Keyes.: With standardized testing to determine schools' ability to teach to the curriculum that is put forward. You probably support the last presentation by the Ontario Federation of Labour, on the core curriculum concept, the basics; that is what the federation called it, touching on the same areas you did.

Dr. Buttrick: Yes, but if the universities concentrated, as the University of Tokyo does, on math, a foreign language and their own language, okay, then the schools would prepare for it. The universities themselves could have a major impact if they were to get together and tell the high schools what you needed to get in.

At present, the province has usurped that role entirely, saying essentially: "Any time you pick up six grade 13 subjects, you're in. We'll pay a university to take you." Maybe this is not the best way. I know that in my daughter's case, it did not work too badly. She had no interest in anything

but foreign languages, so she entered with nothing but foreign languages and English. When you think about it, that is a little odd. I did not mind at the time, because I think it was the only way we could have kept her in school. She entered with Spanish, French, Russian and English. Since then she has picked up Chinese. She is a freak.

Okay, there should be room for freaks. I do not mind that. I cannot push entirely this notion that every kid should know math, a foreign language and his own language, in this case English. There should always be room for exceptions of some sort and I am sure universities will make those. York even admitted some kid aged 13 to study math a couple of years ago. That worked out fine. Why should it not? But it was several years before York picked up basic income units for this kid; he did okay.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Professor Buttrick, for your contribution to our committee today.

Our next delegation will be from the National Youth in Care Network, Could you come forward, please. Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. We are very much looking forward to hearing your viewpoints today. We had quite a stimulating presentation last week. In fact, your brief was distributed at that time, so members have had lots of time to take a look at it. Please begin whenever you are ready. Could you start by identifying yourself for the purpose of Hansard.

NATIONAL YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK

Ms. Simpson: Good afternoon. My name is Allison Simpson. I am 20 years old. I am an ex-ward of the children's aid society and I came into care when I was about 13 years old. At this point, I am on extended care and maintenance. I attended a general/advanced-level high school. At this point, I am in my third year at York University pursuing a psych degree.

Beside me is Fazilla Khan. She is 20 years old. She is also an ex-ward of the children's aid society. She came into care at 14. She is presently on extended care and maintenance. She went to basic-level high school and graduated with a grade 12 diploma. She is upgrading at this point.

Beside her is Cliff Laking, 20 years old. He is from Toronto, an ex-ward of the CAS. He came into care at 12 and is presently on student welfare. He rejected basic-level high school and went to general. He left school at grade 10 to work as an apprentice mechanic. He is now in an adult re-entry program at grade 11, advanced.

Beside him is Marlene MacDonald. She is 19 years old and is from Prince Edward Island. She was recently hired as the new national development officer for the National Youth in Care Network.

Ms. MacDonald: I am basically here as a representative of the network to describe to you briefly what the network is about as an organization.

The National Youth In Care Network was formed and begun two years ago, in 1986. Our basic goals and aims are to promote the views and opinions of young people in care, as well as to develop local support groups for young people in care across the country.

Our executive committee just recently met in Halifax, in mid-September, and we discussed with Allison the brief she prepared for you today. Allison's brief here is a youth-in-care perspective on the education system in Ontario. She spoke with a group of young people in care in Toronto and they were her reference group for putting the brief together.

In Halifax, when Allison met with our executive committee, though, there was national representation. Many of the things Allison and the reference group she spoke with proposed as viewpoints and recommendations on education apply nationally, as well.

We support Allison's brief, and Allison's brief was actually prepared for and on behalf of the network. From there, I will turn it over to Allison. I think she is going to read her report for you.

Ms. Simpson: Who are youth in care? Children raised in care are those whose parents have proved unable to adequately care for them. They have therefore been removed and placed in homes under the legal guardianship of the state.

Children come into care after more or less prolonged efforts have been put forth to correct the functioning of the family. When they come into care, they are placed in a foster and/or group home. These placements may be punctuated by trial returns to their biological homes. The net effect is that these children and youth in care have likely lived in many homes while in care.

Life decisions for children and youth in care, for example, where they live, contacts with parents or siblings, the possibility of returning home and legal status–by a family court judge and child welfare authorities–are made in court. Their lives are therefore also characterized by ongoing and frequent court appearances, which

are emotionally contentious and draining. The net result for many youth in care is that they have childhoods marked with uncertainties regarding where they will live, who will parent them and what their future holds.

There is a second scenario–entry into care at adolescence. When youth come into care at adolescence, they have likely experienced physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse in their biological home, possibly long-standing and undisclosed. This background may erupt or evolve into acting-out behaviour and family conflict. Youth who have come into care as young children and who have been abused while in care may exhibit similar bad behaviour. Youth in care often suffer by being blamed for their behaviour, while the situation to which they are reacting is not scrutinized.

What are the rules of being in care? The latest children can enter into care is before their 16th birthday. They may receive child welfare services until wardship expires on their 18th birthday. If they are seen as not needing or not using child welfare services between the ages of 16 and 18, however, wardship may be terminated by court order. They may receive extended care and maintenance, ECM, from age 18 to 21, if they meet the requirements, which are often restrictive.

Support is clearly a privilege, not a right, from age 18 on. To qualify for ECM, youth must be attending school or be physically and/or mentally dependent. This means that students who are proceeding through the school system age-appropriately have not yet finished high school at the time that guaranteed CAS parental support ends. Furthermore, because financial support ceases to be a right at age 18, students who continue in school may be subjected to demeaning requirements–begging for money–in order to complete high school and to continue on to post-secondary studies.

Also, ECM is inadequate. Currently, the rate set by the Ministry of Community and Social Services is $434 per month. Therefore, it is necessary for the student to work. George Radwanski, in his recent report, Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts, indicated that high school students who work over 15 hours per week were at very high risk to drop out. Currently, the poverty level in Toronto, set by Statistics Canada, is $923 per month. At minimum wage, a student, solely dependent on extended care and maintenance, must work 27 hours per week to meet the poverty level.

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Youth in care already face financial difficulties living independently. Living on your own and going to school makes it more financially taxing. To live independently, youth in care must obtain a part-time job, which increases their risk of dropping out.

For those few youth in care who proceed to post-secondary education, Ontario student assistance program funds are available. The maximum amount a student with no source of income is eligible for is approximately $420 per month plus tuition. The general practice is that students who receive OSAP are not eligible for ECM. It is, therefore, necessary for them to work at least as many hours while doing post-secondary studies as during high school.

Consequences: Children in care tend not to do well at school. The families from which they are removed are likely to have the characteristics that Radwanski states are directly associated with school failure: poor level of parental education, low status of employment and poverty. Once in care, these children and youth tend to have continued difficulty in school. Youth in care are at a high risk to drop out before completion of high school and/or fail to learn while attending. Very few continue to post-secondary studies.

In Ontario, it is difficult to obtain statistical information on youth in care. Brian Raychaba, in his book published by the National Youth in Care Network, To Be On Our Own..., reported one child welfare agency as saying, "Their youth discharged at 18 tended to have completed grades 9 to 10 on the average." Further, Raychaba, now 21 years old, states in his book that he was one of two youth from his agency, which is the second-largest child welfare agency in Canada, to attend university. My agency, which is the largest child welfare agency in Canada, has difficulty telling me how many other students have attended post-secondary studies. This conveys an expectation of nonachievement.

For many youth in care, school is often misery, much like the rest of life. It is not an oasis for them, but rather a repetition of the chaos and failure that characterizes much of the rest of their lives. The youth whom we interviewed said that they were different from other youth due to their life experiences and the fact that they are in care. This makes going to school difficult.

As one youth put it: "It does not matter whether you are going to school or not, in the CAS you know you are different...you go across the street and you are playing with your friends. Then their parents come and get them. Then John

or Bob or whoever comes and gets you. They are your social worker. You know you are different."

Encountering the school system intensifies this feeling of being different. CAS students are treated differently by the school system. They are labelled as CAS kids. With this label comes certain assumptions and expectations that they will be slow learners and troublemakers or require basic-level streaming and behavioural and special education classes.

One often reported response of teachers when they learn a youth is in foster care is, "What did you do wrong to come into care?" Youth in care are made to feel responsible for the situation that causes them to come into care. The CAS kid label and the lack of teacher training and understanding of the in-care experience results in detrimental emotional and scholastic experience for youth in care.

One youth said: "When I was in high school, I used to lie. I used to tell my principals and teachers that I was not in foster homes or group homes. I found that they would discriminate... they would single me out. I felt like I had some sort of disease."

Another youth had problems with a well-meaning teacher: "I remember when I was in grade 7, my teacher found out that I was in a foster home...she heard that I was having problems. So, one day she brought this big garbage bag of clothes, donated by her and the other students in class...she made me feel like a pauper...just because I was in care."

A common theme expressed by these youth was that teachers did not expect youngsters in care to perform academically because of their personal situation. It was felt that teachers offered sympathy instead of understanding, which was not helpful.

Youth in care are often streamed into basic-level schools. The way in which the system operates systematically disadvantages them. For example, intelligence tests are part of the process by which streaming decisions are made. Children or youth who have just entered care are not likely to do well on evaluatory tests. Yet failure to perform can have massive influences on educational options offered them.

Others are disadvantaged in intelligence tests by having been brought up in other countries and/or having other than a middle class Canadian family experience. The culture they know may not help them demonstrate intelligence in terms that mean anything to the educational system. Because of the prolonged uncertainties involved in the child welfare system, the inability to focus and perform well on academic tasks can extend over long periods of time.

In addition to labelling and IQ testing, the constant moving from home to home that characterizes life in care for many also means moving from school to school. This takes its toll on a student's academic progress and often results in a student falling behind.

In summation, many youth in care are pushed into basic level schools, usually at the recommendation of their teachers. Very few opt not to take the advice of their teachers, often because they have internalized the labels the school system has placed upon them.

Recommendations: The school system needs to learn how to meet the reality of the children and youth raised in the child welfare system.

Teacher should be trained about the CAS culture, improving their understanding of what it means to be a youth in care. A portion of the curriculum at Ontario's faculties of education should be devoted to the child welfare system and students who are in care. Professional development days should have the child welfare system as a topic. Panel groups or workshops led by youth from and in the care system should address boards of education, professional development groups and teacher staff meetings. This might prevent some of the more gross examples of labelling and crippling sympathy.

The school experience should be tailor-made to the needs of the particular student–for example, with respect to streaming decisions, promoting because of age and expectations of academic performance–rather than on generalizations. This would come with more individualized attention to the particular student.

We discussed with the reference group Radwanski's recommendation for a monitor and a mentor for each student. In our view, a monitor and a mentor should be the same person. Those youth in care who were most successful in school seemed to have found that one special teacher who was helpful: helpful in making them feel better about themselves; helping them by being available if he or she was needed as an understanding adult; and helpful in providing academic advice and instruction. It was felt that a trustworthy, available teacher whom the student felt he could call upon did make school life more enjoyable and successful.

In our view, this is the role the monitor/mentor should fulfil. However, because the most important factor was the trustworthiness of the teacher, which is an intensely personal judgement, it was

strongly felt that the match could not be mandated but should be encouraged and facilitated by the system and school staff.

Youth in care are at risk to drop out before they complete high school. For some, once through the school system is not enough. In fact, one youth spoke of graduating with a grade 12 diploma from a basic level high school in Toronto but discovered that her reading and writing skills were at a grade 2 to 3 level. Many, like this girl, have to start over at some later point in their lives.

Re-entry options are therefore vital for these youths. The consequences of incomplete education are extremely high for them, since they have few, if any, other supports to help establish themselves in adult life. Therefore, it is crucial that re-entry to school be readily available.

In addition to education itself, a full assortment of support services must be offered, including adequate financial support, emotional support, counselling for academic and personal issues and affordable quality day care for their children.

The school program must be flexible in order to meet the realities of the student's academic and social situation and must not be too restrictive with respect to age.

The school system must do its part as a care giver for its students. We are not saying the school system should replace the CAS as a primary parental institution, but it should accept its secondary parental role. If it does not, the child will pay the price in the short run and society in the long run, if the child is unable to become economically self-sufficient as an adult.

This means the school system should work at becoming more effective with children from less-than-optimal homes, so that when and if the child comes into care, he is not so far behind academically.

The school system should offer school stability even when there are multiple placement changes. We recommend that there be a strong affiliation with the initial high school the student attends and that the academic program planned at that time be considered every time there is an unexpected change in circumstances.

We recommend that if a change in schools can be avoided, it should, by easily allowing out-of-area registration and by permitting flexible timetabling that could accommodate commuting for the student.

The role of the monitor/mentor is important in these negotiations, since personalized attention is the best way for creativity within an institution to be encouraged. Furthermore, the ongoing involvement of one person when all else is changing can be crucially important in good decision-making, as well as comforting to the youth.

The necessity is for the two adult systems, the school and the CAS, which share responsibility for helping the youth to be academically successful, to work together as a team with the youth for best results.

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There should be flexibility in levels of streaming, so that students can put together a program that reflects their needs as they change over time. The levels should not be separated geographically in different schools, because this limits the flexibility available and leads to students in basic-level schools having nothing to strive for. This may lead to the student becoming discouraged and giving up or, alternatively, giving into the short-term advantages of not having to work to achieve, the long-term consequences being that he does not have a good enough education or enough work skills to succeed in post-secondary education.

Students must be assured of economic and social support for the duration of their school experience. Thus, the guarantee of support inherent in wardship should not be allowed to lapse before the normal school-leaving time. The Ontario student assistance program should support students to the poverty level for the duration of the students' academic career, without the expectation of excessive amounts of work. Alternatively, extended care and maintenance should be available to augment OSAP at or above the poverty level, $923 per month in Toronto.

I will now turn over to Fazilla Khan and Cliff Laking, who will give you a bit of their special area, what bugs them about the educational system.

Ms. Khan: My name is Fazilla Khan. I graduated from a basic-level with a grade 12 diploma. I had six awards and I do not know how to read and write. The teachers in the school at the basic level think the kids are dumb. I do not think they are dumb. I just think they have not been taught well. If you have any questions, I will do my best to answer them.

Mr. Laking: I am Cliff Laking. There are a lot of things that can be said about the education system, recommendations and thousands of things like that, but I feel the most important thing that has helped me through my time in school is really basically at one point they wanted to put me in a basic program and I turned that

down and said, "No, it's not what I want." A lot of people would not have whatever it takes to do that.

Through my years in school, certain teachers and sometimes the vice-principal, sometimes the principal–I went to a lot of different schools–kept my faith in myself and showed me I could actually do the work and that I could really stay with it, hang tough and get through to where I want to go. After a few years, I got bored and went out and worked as a press mechanic. That was not it; it was too easy. I came back. Now I am in an adult re-entry program. I am working at a grade 11 advanced level. I am good in English, math, biology, geography, stuff like that.

I really owe a lot to the teachers who showed me and directed me, pushed me and kept me going in that direction. I intend to go to university. Hopefully, I can keep on hanging tough and getting through what I need. But I really owe a lot to the teachers and I think I was very lucky to have those special people in my path. That is pretty well it.

Madam Chairman: Ms. MacDonald, did you want to comment before we open for questions?

Ms. MacDonald: No. I guess I am basically here to let these guys present their views as the young people who really are the essence of the network and who really run it. That is what we are all about, so I am open.

Madam Chairman: We certainly appreciate the fact you came here. It must take a considerable amount of courage to come before a legislative committee when you really do not know what we are all about. You have certainly taught us a lot about what you are all about. We appreciate that. We have a number of members who have indicated they have questions. We will start off with Mr. Johnston, because he is always gentle, followed by Mr. Jackson and then Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I will not say a thing this time.

It is a delight to have you here providing the perspective you are. It is really very helpful to us. I always end up asking the ministry for information, so I will start off by doing that. You allude in your brief to the difficulty of finding out through the CAS just what the educational outcomes for wards are. Mr. Cooke and I were chatting. He used to work with the CAS in Windsor back many moons ago now. He has often said the problem is that shelter is placed well above education within the way the children's aid society deals with things. Maybe the fact that they do not have an easy handle on those figures reflects that, as well as some of the other problems you run into.

I would like to try to get from the ministry, if we can, some kind of information, if it has any, around the particular case of wards, what their educational attainment is and what schools they go to. It would be really fascinating to know just how many do get streamed into basic vocational schools automatically, and that kind of thing. If that information is not available at this time, I think it is the kind of thing this select committee should be suggesting to the government, that children's aid societies should be providing it to the government on a regular basis so that it can be looked at.

Madam Chairman: Perhaps the other suggestion is, if those figures are not available through the Ministry of Education, perhaps the Ministry of Community and Social Services might have some of that data.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Or the individual children's aid societies.

Madam Chairman: Or the individual children's aid societies.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes. I would be very surprised if the Ministry of Community and Social Services has it, although it would be important for them to have it. But if it is not there, then some means of gathering that information, just for social policy reasons, even if we cannot deal with it at this stage, would be a really important thing for us to ask for, it seems to me.

I wanted to ask you a question about how many schools you went to. You went to basic level 12?

Ms. Khan: Just one school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And even with being in a consistent school like that, you found you were talked down to and never really got the education you needed?

Ms. Khan: No. It was hard because I had a problem reading and writing and the teachers did not notice and they did not care. I was just there from nine to three. I was embarrassed to tell them that I did not know how to read and write because all these students in the class knew how to read and write except me, and I did not want anyone to laugh at me. They never paid me any attention.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How did you hide it for four years from them?

Ms. Khan: I used to cheat from my girlfriend.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And borrow from her?

Ms. Khan: Yes. I would go over to her house and we would do an assignment together. When the test came, I would fail but they still passed me

on because I was getting old and they just wanted to get me out of school. That was it, basically.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What are you doing now?

Ms. Khan: I am taking basic-level upgrading. Right now, my level is a 3 to 4.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Where are you doing it? At Futures?

Ms. Khan: No. I am taking upgrading as a basic level.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: At school, though, at a high school?

Ms. Khan: No, it is an adult learning centre.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: At the Adult Learning Centre?

Ms. Khan: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How many schools did you go to, Cliff?

Mr. Laking: Myself? I live out in the country area. As a quick estimate, I would say about six, seven or eight different high schools. I would come in halfway through their first semester or stuff like that. I was kind of lucky, too, because the teachers would not hold my marks that I missed against me and they would let me do whatever I was at.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The problems are as extreme in a Metro area, I am gathering, as they are in the country, in terms of being moved from school to school all the time. Which one of you did the study of the 15?

Ms. Simpson: I did.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: These are kids who are at the Planning Act Review Committee?

Ms. Simpson: Yes. They are a part of a newsletter group. I asked them if they would help me to do the study and give me their voice on exactly what they thought. From what they said, we were able to put the brief together. Then we got these figures from the 15 that were present at the time, their findings and their placements, etc.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Some of the figures are really amazing. the fact that somebody could have 12 placements and still get his grade 12 or his grade 12 basic or whatever is phenomenal stick-to-it-iveness on his part, I must say.

Ms. Simpson: That is part of the problem.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But this kind of information was not available from the children's aid societies. Did you try the boards to see if they could provide it?

Ms. Simpson: Actually, at this point in time I will be involved in trying to put together some sort of information of things like this, because they did not really have them available. I guess they are realizing they do need it to look at exactly what the academic or the scholastic achievement is, whether it is anywhere near the cutoff point for most of the youth in care. They really do not have this information readily available at this point, but I think they are putting forth a step to make it available, because they want to know, we need to know and you need to know.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was also struck by the fact that your emphasis on mentoring seems to make an awful lot of sense. If you have meaningful adults missing in your life consistently, then that would be a very important thing to have. Are foster parents, on the whole, not equipped for that, or is the problem that you are moving between foster homes so much that you really need something outside of that sort of custodial place?

Ms. Simpson: It is kind of an additive affect, because if they are moving from placement to placement, it is hard to establish themselves in a sort of family arrangement. Many of them may opt to live independently at 16, 18 or so forth. If they are moving around between that time and when they choose independence, they are on their own after a bit, depending on when they come into care. Many of the foster parents share the same disadvantages as the parents or the family life that these youth have been taken from.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Could I just ask a very practical question on this? You are out in the country going from foster home to foster home, moving from board jurisdiction to board jurisdiction, by the sound of it, if you are in that many placements. How would you see mentoring work, given that situation? That is a pretty tough way to get hold of some adult who is going to be with you as you make those steps around. How would you see that working?

Mr. Laking: Basically, people are moving from school to school. They get settled in and start getting used to a lot of things, and then they have to get up and move and go somewhere else. It is going to cause them to get down on the system and down on themselves. They are just going to say, "To heck with it," and give up on it. I figure there should be somebody who is going to lead them and give them encouragement, no matter who it is. Myself, I was the one who picked the person, a teacher or what not, somebody I could gain a little bit of trust in, at

least while I was at that school. It has really helped me out a lot, just going to school, doing my work and trying to reach whatever heights I can climb.

Foster parents, as she said, do not have the time to worry about your school stuff. They have lots of things in their lives. Also, when you just move into a foster home, maybe you are expected to call them mom and dad or Dick and Jane or something like that. You cannot really trust people you are going to be with 24 hours a day that quickly. It is just not possible. But if you can gain a little bit of short-term trust for a teacher or somebody like that–you have a lot of different people to select from–sometimes things just click.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Sometimes they do not. Thank you.

Mr. Jackson: I would like to commend all four individuals who are before us right now, particularly Allison. I want to commend you for your work. It is very rare that we see someone who has come through the system who, rather than being focused completely ahead and wanting to get rid of that which is behind them–you have shown that wonderful quality in wanting to go back and do something to better the condition of those who will follow you. It is rare, and when we do see it, it is deeply appreciated. On a personal note, I want to commend you for your work. These kind of insights are rare.

I have a couple of questions. Like Mr. Cooke, I have had some experience working with children's aid society wards and the school system. I have very tragic memories of what was going on. I want to focus in on the number of placements.

We are to understand from your report that the number of placements here are the number of foster homes. Did you do a correlation to schools?

Ms. Simpson: Yes, we did. Actually, not on the back here. The number of placements are involved in foster homes and/or group homes.

Mr. Jackson: Okay. During your survey, although it is not present here, did you talk about the number of–

Ms. Simpson: We did ask. Many of the kids have been in as many placements in schools as they have placements in foster homes, depending on whether they moved out of the area to different jurisdictions. Some, like Fazilla and myself, have been lucky enough to be in one constant high school, even if there were changes going on.

Mr. Jackson: That was the experience I had. School phobia is a condition. For school phobics, one of the serious considerations they examine is the number of school changes. It seems you are in a high risk group for that. Mr. Johnston got into some questions about how we, as a system, could overcome that. I always thought we should perhaps be looking at ensuring that the school placement be stabilized. You have the mentoring concept. That ties it to a personality, but you also have to tie it to your friends around you. You could move with your mentor. Your mentor could move to another high school, but you would lose all your linkages with your friends and your peer group, so it is equally as important.

Ms. Simpson: That was something that came out of the group meetings. The kids were saying the very same thing. Friends help when you are going to the same school, and it is difficult when you have kids who move from school to school without their peers and the friends they have established from kindergarten. Actually, we had one youth saying the other night that some kids say, "Well, I have known this guy for eight years." Then he can say, "Well, I have known him for fifteen minutes, wow," or for two months.

That was the feeling they had. Friends were vitally important for them because everything is changing. They need somebody and something there. They need to feel as regular or the same as everybody else. Normalcy is very important for them and friends are an important part of that. If they are moving and they cannot make connections, if they did not live in the same neighbourhood or they did not go to the same kindergarten together, it is very hard for them.

Mr. Jackson: I am glad you expanded on that because I think mentoring, in and of itself, is not the solution. It is just one component of the larger need for normalization, which is an appropriate word. "Stabilization" is also appropriate.

This is going to be a difficult question. You already talked about stigmatization, and it is prevalent everywhere. Anybody who has had any contact with students in this regard knows how deeply this cuts. We have a process in our schools where we provide special education funding and transportation to ensure a consistency of program for a student based on his special needs. There is a variety of those.

The point I am trying to illustrate is, is that an area of a solution or–I have to ask you as someone who has gone through the system–would that grate on you? Would that make life more difficult for you, if you were able to stay

in a given school but you were bused a reasonable length to get to that school, or if your home placement, your foster parent placement changed, there were some mechanism by which you could attend the same school? That would involve busing and money, no matter how you cut it, if it is a distance factor. Do you have thoughts on that?

Ms. Simpson: We do have that in the recommendation. We said that if there were flexibility to allow out-of-area registration or even to evolve a timetable to fix things so that kids at a great distance could come in later—maybe a timetable could be worked around our times. We did have that as a part of the recommendation, something very similar to what you are saying about making it possible for that stabilizing factor to be there, even in schools, when everything else is changing. So it does really rub well with us, because it was part of what came out of the group.

These kids felt some part of their lives had to be stable. If they are to successfully complete or have any sort of success in their school life, that, at least, must be stable for them.

Mr. Jackson: Madam Chairman, I realize time is tight here. I do want to proceed with two more quick questions.

You make a recommendation with respect to more of the academic decisions being vested with the student. Can you expand a little bit more on that. In your preamble before your report, on page 2 at the top, you say, "Students should be given more responsibility with regard to their academic decisions." Could you expand a little more on that just so I understand more clearly what you mean.

Ms. Simpson: For youth in care, a lot of their life choices are made by other sources. It is as if everything is controlling them. We believe students should be given a choice in exactly what areas they want to take, and pushing them into basic level as a stream is not the choice for many of them. They need to opt to say, "No, I think I can do better." They just need to make choices.

Flexibility in the school system would allow that in the sense that if they want to take basic-level math and they are better in English, then they can take a general level. That is not possible when they are pushed into the basic-level school system. In the sense of individualization, to help them to grow in the areas where they are strong, that was basically it. They should be given more choice instead of being labelled children's aid society kids, and then having assumptions made about where they are going to go, how far they can go and the limitations that are set for them, just because of that label with regard to what kind of schools they go to.

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Mr. Jackson: My final question is to build on that point, with respect to decisions and having them enter at the secondary level, because that is really where a lot of the decisions are made. But many of the problems are encountered at the elementary level where there is limited decision-making on the part of the student. It strikes me that what is required at the elementary level is more of an advocate, someone who can be monitoring and ensuring you are not labelled.

When you have eight parents in the course of six years through the early part of elementary school, it is hard to get consistency of advocacy. Perhaps something is missing in advocacy at the elementary level which will allow you not to enter secondary school behind the eight ball, as it were.

Ms. Simpson: Basically, a lot of kids were either pushed ahead or they just skipped grades because of their age and not what was happening to them.

Mr. Jackson: Was that Fazilla's problem? You were experiencing this difficulty through elementary school. It did not surface all of a sudden at high school.

Ms. Khan: I never went to elementary school, I went to high school when I came to Canada. They just put me into high school. I did not know how to do the work, so I was failing and they just put me alone, because I was getting older.

Mr. Jackson: Were you not offered English-as-a-second-language training almost immediately?

Ms. Khan: No, nothing like that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is this Toronto you are talking about?

Ms. Khan: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: Unbelievable; I am sorry.

Ms. Simpson: I was just going to say that perhaps the right way would be that the school system and the child welfare system be grouped as parents with responsibility for learning about each other and then what is happening with their kids might be stepping ground to make sure that elementary success is available to them, because it is not just in high school, as you said. If elementary teachers do not know what is happening, abused kids may be behind the eight ball, as you said, from a very early age. To me, it is in part due to ignorance about exactly what our

life situations are and what we are going through. So training for the school and for the CAS, to know each other and work together as parents, is very important there.

Mr. Jackson: I like your recommendation about the faculties of education being more sensitized. We, as a committee, have been looking generally at the area of strengthening elementary school guidance, which provides you with your consistency. You can conceivably have the same guidance counsellor for five years of elementary school, versus five different teachers and seven different foster parents.

Just to tie in some of your points, I see a distinct difference between advocacy and more personal autonomy in your life decisions, because it seems you are getting to the secondary school experience behind the eight ball to begin with. At least that was the experience I was seeing with the students who were coming before us.

Thank you for your patience. I wish we had more time. You are all to be commended.

Madam Chairman: Just as you thought you were about to escape, I must tell you we have one more questioner; a final question from Mrs. O'Neill.

Mrs. O'Neill: I want to thank you very much for coming. I do think you should take note that your presentation is not unlike the one the Ontario Federation of Students presented to us. Of course, for the most part they likely come from those more normal backgrounds that you have quoted.

I am very happy you mentioned mentoring. I think that is exactly what happens to many students, not just students who have your circumstances. You yourselves, as you likely know, are now mentors. You are listening to a lot of other people and you are using the experiences you have had. That is certainly the truest form of peer mentoring, and I am really very happy you are giving of yourselves like that.

I would like to ask Fazilla a couple of questions, if I may. One is, did you speak English when you came? Was that your language when you came to Canada?

Ms. Khan: Yes, I did.

Mrs. O'Neill: So that, likely, in a way, worked to your disadvantage.

Ms. Khan: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Can you say a little bit about some of the things you liked about taking high school at the basic-level program?

Ms. Khan: What did I take, do you mean?

Mrs. O'Neill: What did you like about that experience?

Ms. Khan: It was an experience I never had, coming from Guyana. The school was different in many ways. The teachers were different. It was sort of like they did not pay you much attention, and there were a lot of students in the classroom. There were too many.

Mrs. O'Neill: And that was a different experience than you had had.

Ms. Khan: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Was there anything you liked about the experience?

Ms. Khan: No.

Mrs. O'Neill: So it was really four years of a grind or being relatively unhappy.

Ms. Khan: Yes, just being there. I did not know what I was doing, but I was there, copying from my friends. I did not know what was happening, what I was doing, what I was being taught; I was just there.

Mrs. O'Neill: Did you attend regularly?

Ms. Khan: Yes, I did. I had four awards, was an outstanding student, never skipped a class, was always there on time, listened to my teacher. I have a grade 12 diploma and I do not know how to read and write.

Mrs. O'Neill: Could you tell us what the awards were in, please.

Ms. Khan: One was for doing well in college and one was for going on work experience, like hairdressing and that sort of thing. In basic level, you have those kinds of things. I had one for cooking, for typing and for being an outstanding student. That was it.

Mrs. O'Neill: Have those skills been useful for you, the ones that you got the awards for?

Ms. Khan: Yes, they are useful.

Mrs. O'Neill: But you still want to read and write.

Ms. Khan: Yes, that was my major thing, going to school to know how to read and write, not to know how to cook.

Mrs. O'Neill: Cliff, do you have anything to add to your experience? You turned down the basic-level program school you were designated for. Can you tell us what you liked about the other experiences you walked away from, or did you not have happy experiences when you walked away from the school?

Mr. Laking: I had a few nice experiences. The only experience I did not like was that the

vice-principal in one of my schools thought I was absolutely insane because I was from the children's aid society. I am serious; he thought I was crazy. He actually offered me days off to cool down and calm out and stuff like that whenever I wanted. I thought that was fairly amusing.

As for the experiences I liked, I guess during the first couple of years I moved into the country, I got in touch with a few good teachers and made a few good friends who I still go to visit once in a while. I got a good foundation in the sciences. I had good teachers in English. They did not expect you to call them Mr. John or Mr. Smith or something like that. You could actually call them by their first names if you wanted to.

Mrs. O'Neill: Was it a smaller school?

Mr. Laking: Yes, it was a lot smaller school. It just made you feel close. It made you feel like one of them and not just: "You're the kid; he's the teacher, the big boss. You do what he says. If you don't, you're down in the office." As far as I am concerned, that does not work. You just have to have a good, concrete understanding of one another. He has to be there to assist you, and you have to be there to get along with him and try to do your best.

Mrs. O'Neill: I want to ask you each the same question. Are you enjoying what you are doing now? You are doing it in different ways, but you have re-entered a program and you are now at an adult learning centre. How do you like that experience? Is that a good experience?

Mr. Laking: Yes, it is a good experience. I am getting the opportunity to go back to school instead of having to sit in class with a bunch of little kids. I would not go if that was the case. Again, I can call the teachers by their first names, which is nice. I do not want to be a little kid again.

Mrs. O'Neill: And you are studying at the advanced level now.

Mr. Laking: Yes, I am. I am working towards university. I hope to go to university in Thunder Bay, Lakehead or something like that, a small university where the classrooms are not overcrowded. As far as I am concerned, I cannot just sit there and watch a teacher speak. I go to sleep, even if I have had my full night's sleep.

1630

Mrs. O'Neill: I am glad you have learned your own strengths and weaknesses. I think that is really a big help to us all.

Would you like to say a little bit, Fazilla?

Ms. Khan: Sure. I have been going to the basic adult class for about a month and a half. When I started, my level was about grade 3-grade 4 and my level now is around grade 8. That is because they have been paying attention to me. I have an individual tutor and that has been helpful. It has been excellent for me.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you using the computer in your literacy training? Is it computer-oriented literacy training?

Ms. Khan: No.

Mrs. O'Neill: There is no computer involved?

Ms. Khan: No.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you both very much for being so honest with us, and thank you all for coming. It has been very helpful to us to see the people we are trying to serve.

Mr. Laking: It is great to try to get some things out in the open.

Mrs. O'Neill: Very good. We have to talk with people who have the experience.

Madam Chairman: I would like to echo Mrs. O'Neill's comments. We really did appreciate the fact you came today. You are to be congratulated, not only for the courage to come and tell us, but also just for surviving in a system that has made it very difficult for you to survive. We wish you the best of luck, not only in your future education but in whatever you do. Thank you for coming.

Our next presenter this afternoon is Ruth Nishri. Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. We are pleased to have you with us today. Are you going to read the brief you are presenting?

Mrs. Nishri: Yes.

Madam Chairman: I just want to mention, for members' information, if you have not had a chance to read it, one thing that I discovered at the end, that I did not realize at the beginning. It was that Ted, who was in grade 1 at the beginning of the story, is now in fourth year university. I just thought I would point out that this took place over a number of years.

Mrs. Nishri: Oh, yes. I had two sons, as I mentioned. One of them graduated as a scholar and this is another experience I could not put into 15 minutes, but certainly they both pointed to the same conclusions, really.

RUTH NISHRI

Mrs. Nishri: My name is Ruth Nishri. In the next 15 minutes, I will try to present to you eight years of my experience as the mother of two

students in Ontario schools. My sons had many good teachers, a few excellent teachers and some bad ones. My argument is not with the teachers, but with the school system which badly needs improvement.

When our family moved from Montreal to Toronto, Alex entered grade 6 and Ted grade 1. Ted's first report card described him as starting to read sentences, but his second report card described him as academically at kindergarten level. Between those two report cards, my son was given an IQ test. This test was given to him without parental knowledge. After the test, Ted was removed from every learning group. He was given just a piece of paper and told to draw something.

Can you imagine how such treatment influences a child's image of himself and his social position among his peers? Alarmed by my son's stories, I spoke with his teacher, but her answer, "Ted will learn when he is ready," made no sense to me. I saw the damage created by this treatment.

Later I was contacted by the school, told about the IQ test and Ted's very low score on this test, describing him as a slow learner, on the border of retardation. I was very surprised. Ted was my younger child and I believed I could spot such a severe problem. Second, Ted was attending kindergarten in Montreal and the teacher there should have been able to see it too. The school chose to disregard my opinion, and very unfortunately, Ted's file from Montreal was lost. Since then Ted's file was lost a few more times and on some occasions I found in the file wrong and misleading information.

A few years later I was told that Ted's psychological file did not describe him as a slow learner. I have no idea how Ted really did on this test. One thing is sure, after the IQ test, the school isolated him from learning.

Ironically, my older son, in the same school, was left to play all day with the projector because he was above his classmates' level. Both sons were beaten at school and on the way to school, almost daily. Some of the beatings put my children in the doctor's office.

On this basis, I demanded and received their transfer to a neighbouring school. There were no beatings. My older school-age son could not play with the projector. He had to work hard to catch up with his class. I understood that in our school system some children have less chance to learn only because their parents bought or rented on the wrong side of the street.

In his new school, Ted continued to be excluded from all learning groups. At this time, I knew very little English, but I could read. I knew math, so I started teaching Ted. Two years later, the school provided Ted with a speech therapist because my students picked up from me my bad English pronunciation.

Soon enough, Ted was able to demonstrate his new skills to his teacher at school. Ted started to work at school too, but it was just before the vacation. The teacher agreed with my suggestion that, considering all the problems during the school year and considering Ted's own wishes, he should be given the chance to be examined after the vacation.

The teacher promised that this would be done if we would stay in the borders of North York. My husband worked in Scarborough, but on the basis of this promise, we rented in North York. We believed that all these problems with the IQ test were mistakes that should be forgotten.

School authorities were treating it differently. Ted was not tested after the vacation. He was dumped into grade 1 and felt badly cheated. He noticed that other children were treated differently, and slowly, I understood it too.

It was impossible to communicate with the school. For example, when Ted was in grade 3, he was given an academic test. First, the principal informed Ted and myself that Ted performed almost on a grade 4 level. He was placed for math in the grade 4 class and promised to be transferred formally to grade 4 by Christmas.

Two months later, the same principal told me that Ted did those tests on the grade 2 level and removed Ted from the grade 4 math. I never really learned how my son performed on those tests or when the principal was lying.

On advice from Dr. Goodman, a psychologist with the North York Board of Education, Ted went for reassessment to North York General Hospital. Dr. B. A. Hoddinott, chief psychologist at North York General Hospital, found Ted at least average. Ted was placed in a new school in grade 4. In the former school, he was in grade 3.

For the next year and a half, Ted enjoyed normal school. According to Ted's report card, Ted was working at the level of his class. The bad memories started fading away. Maybe it was an accident, but during this time, a researcher from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education who was interested in Ted's case was on his sabbatical.

In grade 6, Ted's problems started again. "Small mistakes," I tried to explain to a frightened Ted and to myself. Grades 7 and 8 were horrible. The hostility towards Ted was open and very visible. For example, on one occasion, I received a letter written by a school counsellor bringing to my attention very serious complaints from Ted's teachers. I contacted all the teachers. They knew nothing about the letter and about those fabricated complaints.

I notified the principal and school board about it. I received no answer from the board. The principal asked me in future never to contact Ted's teachers, only the counsellors.

On another occasion, the school principal in another school had some complaints against Ted and told me to take my son home with me. I immediately contacted the North York Board of Education and asked it to inquire about the original complaint against Ted and the principal's action.

After two weeks, I was told by Dr. Haliburton from the North York Board of Education that Ted was unwanted in St. Andrews school and could be placed in another school. The original complaint was never investigated, and Ted was kept out of school for three weeks until I placed him temporarily in a private school. I knew the school action was against the regulation, and I hoped the Board of Education knew it too, but in Ted's case, rules were broken many times.

The worst of Ted's problems were beatings. In one case, he spent two weeks in bed on medication. Some beatings took place in the classroom in the presence of the school personnel. At this point I was worried about Ted's physical health more than about his education.

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On two separate occasions school principals stopped police investigations. The school trustee did not want to interfere. The Ministry of Education did nothing to help Ted. I understood I could not protect my son from daily abuse. On this basis, I applied for and received Ted's early release from school. See the attached form. That was even before his 14th birthday.

Today Ted is a university student, fourth year, so probably other labelled and mislabelled kids can go to university, too. As an adult, Ted is carrying the physical and psychological scars from his school years. Our existing laws and regulations did not protect him from abuse. I hope new legislation will protect future students.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. Nishri. I will now open up for questions from the members. Mr. Reycraft.

Mr. Reycraft: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I guess, after listening to your brief, after reading it last night, I must confess I am still unable to identify why Ted got into the difficulty he did at school. Did he speak English when you moved to Toronto from Montreal?

Mrs. Nishri: Yes, English was his third language, because in our home we spoke two languages other than English. The problem is he was not speaking fluently, but he was in English kindergarten in the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and he was graduated to grade one, so I would assume that he was on the level, capable of speaking normally.

Mr. Reycraft: But I have to assume that the standardized tests that were given to him, the IQ tests and others, were given to him because he was not performing well in school tests or in his daily work.

Mrs. Nishri: No, no.

Mr. Reycraft: No? You think it was for a different reason?

Mrs. Nishri: His report card stated that he was working about the level, starting to read sentences, starting to study math, so obviously the report card that I received prior to that had nothing that indicated an IQ test was required.

Mr. Reycraft: Why did they give him an IQ test?

Mrs. Nishri: When I spoke with Dr. Goodman, the chief psychologist, I asked him why it was done. He told me the school requested it. Then I came back to the school and asked why, and they said: "No, we did not request it. They did." So there you have it.

You see, in our system the parent has the legal authority to make decisions about the child; unless the courts take a different view. But the school does not have to tell me everything. I know that recently my son sued the Board of Education and his lawyer received some of his file, which I was entitled to receive when my son left school; but they refused it and I have it in writing.

His lawyer again heard the story that the file was lost, again. It was lost over 20 times. At the end I was presented with some pieces of files which I could prove are lies top to bottom, up to the point that they do not acknowledge that certain tests took place; whereas I have from Dr. Goodman the reason why these tests were done. But now they have sort of disappeared from his file.

Okay, I have a letter from Dr. Goodman stating that they were done. Dr. Hoddinott had

this letter. You see, my main point is that the school file is this kind of folder with pieces of paper in it, and these pieces of paper can change. I saw them change retroactively, and I was thinking, why is it impossible, if this is the folder, to make a simple rule? Everything that goes into this folder, the parents should receive a copy and sign for it. This way you can check the accuracy. Then, of course, if a piece of paper is missing or is substituted, then the parents have a copy of it. Is that not very simple?

The second thing is, please understand, if that child's future depends on the basis of this file, that is more than to forge a cheque for a million dollars. That is all the child's future. You can take these pieces of paper, even the achievement chart, to change, and I have it. When my son graduated from grade 7 to grade 8, all his teachers refused to sign his report card because the counsellors lowered the grade and wanted to fail him. He had the nicest report card a kid can receive, unsigned by all his teachers as a protest.

Mr. Reycraft: Are you saying that Ted's teachers refused to sign his report card because somebody had lowered the marks that were placed on it?

Mrs. Nishri: Right, the school counsellors. I have the unsigned report card. If you want, I can bring you a copy of it.

Mr. Reycraft: Did you take that to your trustee?

Mrs. Nishri: Oh, yes, at a certain point, as I mentioned to you here. I contacted the trustee when the situation was much more serious than what I am telling you. On a much more serious question, I contacted him. The trustee was alarmed by that and said, "I will investigate." After that, he told me, "I spoke with the school principal, and he told me something different." I said: "Let's check what he told you. I do not want anything untrue. I want it just on the basis of papers I have. Let's check it on the basis of fact."

He said, "Oh, he is a very honourable man, and I trust him completely." By that, it finished. He said, "I will not get involved any more." So he did not even get involved when the kid with a grade 9 credit, who had reached grade 9 English, was put into a grade 8 class. It is against the regulation, again.

I put it to the attention of the Minister of Education, and if you want, I can bring you my stack of correspondence with two ministers of Education, Mr. Maki and Mr. McDowell.

Basically, I understand your way of thinking. You think that probably all this happened and I was sitting and doing nothing. I tried to do my best, and believe me, before I took a kid of 13 and a half out of school, I was thinking about what I was doing.

Then I did not know how it was looking, because when you are taking a kid out of school, what can he do? How can you give him an education? We tried to move back to Quebec and I found–one, two, three–that any school I wanted to enrol my son in was asking for his previous report card, what his previous school was. Right? If a kid has a criminal record, the law protects him fantastically. You cannot even write his name if he murdered, whatever he did, but if the school stamped a kid as a slow learner, he is going stamped all over.

I remember when I started teaching my son reading. The problem was that suddenly a cheerful child started feeling, "I am dumb; I am stupid," because that is what he was told at school. He was doing well in the groups and was now suddenly removed from the groups. I was at the open house at the school, and at that time the kid was fine. So what happened next?

Madam Chairman: Several parents who have come before our committee have suggested that there may be a need for a student ombudsman. They felt that when there is a dispute between a parent and a school, there is nobody who is independent and unbiased who can look at the problem and try to resolve it. Perhaps that is what you would like to see.

Mrs. Nishri: Yes. I went to the Provincial Ombudsman, and I can show you the correspondence with the Provincial Ombudsman. There is no basic legislation to protect my son, according to the Ombudsman.

First of all, the story is the Ombudsman took about a year and a half when the kid was out of school, when I tried to give him an education at home.

Second, please understand, all of you believe that our schools operate on some law. I know. There is no law protecting the student. If you establish such an ombudsman, the ombudsman should have some disciplinary way of acting and not just be able to make a recommendation. He has to have some clout to act.

1650

Mr. D. S. Cooke: The Ombudsman does not have jurisdiction over the boards of education.

Mrs. Nishri: Yes. That is exactly what he wrote, but he wrote it after one and a half years, almost two years. He wrote that it is out of his jurisdiction, but there were things that were in the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education, such as

placing a kid with a grade 9 credit in a grade 8 class and other things like that. So he preferred not to act on that. By that, it finished.

There is another point. Once you do not have a standard–I was reading in the newspaper that the North York Board of Education is claiming that the kids who fail a grade in elementary school are not going on to university. It is a funny answer because the kids are not failing from a lack of knowledge. They are failing because they are labelled as slow learners. Kids go with groups of their peers, except for the kid who does not have potential.

By my understanding, if you tell the kid, "You are lazy," you tell him nothing wrong because what you are telling him is: "You can do better. Work harder." Some kids can learn in five minutes. Others need half an hour. But there are kids who will not sit five minutes and others will sit an hour.

I am sure that in our school system if Louis Pasteur, Winston Churchill or Albert Einstein were students, they would be, for sure, just shipped to the basic level, doing something on their level because there is no tool, really, to check the child's potential. All the IQ tests do not check it. Another thing about the IQ test is the way it is addressed, but that is another story.

Madam Chairman: Perhaps then, if we could summarize, when we are making our recommendations, you would like us to look at both the labelling aspects and also the fact that there needs to be some way for the parent and school to communicate and for somebody to adjudicate those disputes so that they are fairly resolved?

Mrs. Nishri: Yes. I would also like to raise the question of the school file. This is basic. The school file should be checked in such a way, I think, as I saw in my old country. Simply, the parents got a copy of everything going into the file and had to sign for that. I believe, honestly, that it should be a criminal offence to doctor a child's file.

Madam Chairman: Certainly, with our new Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, that would seem to be very much in keeping with it. People are entitled to see what is on their child's school file, and perhaps, as you say, maybe have a copy.

I know there was some uncertainty as to whether children's school files would be able to be seen by a parent, but I think the Ministry of Education has received a ruling that, yes, parents can have access to their child's file. So we could perhaps clarify that for you.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: It will cost the parents $600 or $700 to get it.

Mr. Reycraft: The files have been available to parents for several years now–the Ontario student records.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: The entire file?

Mr. Reycraft: The parent has the right to see the Ontario student records.

Madam Chairman: The entire file?

Mr. Reycraft: Yes.

Mrs. Nishri: As long as you are telling a kid, and you do not ensure that all the pieces are there and are not shuffled and removed–I can assure you that I saw my son's file doctored, and well doctored. The things were coming in and out, even the things that I had copies of, like report cards, which I had in my hands, could change. I can give you an example.

A kid graduated from grade 6. When he was in grade 6, he was the best in his class in math. He was helping other students in grade 1. When he arrived in grade 7, he was put into remedial math with the same kids he was helping. For him, that was a disaster because he had a skeleton in his closet. I called the school, understanding that there was some sort of misunderstanding. "Oh, well, the other school let us know this."

Instead of going to work, I went to the school. There was nobody to speak to. "Mrs. Nishri, we have nothing, except what you have in this report card." But this report card says that Ted is excellent in math, so I went back to this school. "No, they must send it to us." So I walked for three days between two schools. I was lucky there was not a big distance between them.

At the end, "Oh, that is the principal who was transferred." Okay, I managed to locate the principal. I managed to get, "Oh, that was a misunderstanding." Obviously, it was not. You see, if they want to prove that a kid is a slow learner, they will prove it. They are all. They have all the cards in the deck in their hands. They can play it as they want.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for bringing your concerns before us today.

Our final presentation this afternoon will be the Coalition for Public Education. Come forward, please.

Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. I guess I should say welcome back to our committee. I see that you have a very comprehensive brief before us today. I understand that the clerk has talked to you and you said that you would be summarizing for the members so that

we would have sufficient time for questions at the end.

COALITION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mr. McClintock: Yes, we will. We hope to provide you with at least half of the period allotted to us for discussion. We will try to do even better than that. Perhaps you will recognize my colleagues, because all were present and two were presenters along with me at the July 27 session.

We have Dianne Meaghan, Kathleen Hunter, Craig Cribar and myself, George McClintock. I hope the fact that we do have to condense this and summarize it very drastically will not deter you from actually reading it and reading the material in the appendices, which we believe is also extremely relevant.

I would say first of all that I will be dealing with the general principles and then with the actual recommendations, which you will find on pages 26 and 27. You might like just to turn one corner of the page down so that it will be a handy reference point to that.

We would say very briefly that, in our concerns for the wellbeing of the students and all in the system, the highest priority in our education system ought to be given towards developing the human potential of each student to the highest. So it was distressing to hear the first-person experience of the previous speaker with her child and also, as a teacher, to realize that this is by no means unique.

When we find reference to things like streaming, which we will touch only briefly, we would say that this is the sort of thing we must avoid: any sort of permanent labelling or categorizing of students or anything that tends to lock them into some kind of track that is not really where they want to go or where they have the potential for going.

1700

We would say that all the resources that we can allocate in terms of personnel and material resources, classroom resources, finances and so on ought to be provided with this intention in mind: to develop the highest human potential of each person in the system, particularly of the students. To this end, we would propose that we should at least accept as an ideal that each school should try, in itself, to become a microcosm of the quality of human society that we would like to see developed in Ontario.

I will now suggest that Dianne Meaghan continue on the subject that she has been assigned.

Ms. Meaghan: The Coalition for Public Education commends the provision of greater opportunities for creative personal interaction between students and their teachers. We deplore those tendencies that would reduce these opportunities or even deprive students and teachers through increased depersonalization of the education system, including larger class sizes, a wider use of teaching machines and unduly high pupil-teacher ratios. We refer you for an expansion of that argument to appendix 2.

Under the sections "Values and the Public School Teacher" and "Values in Public Schools," sections 20 to 25, the importance of the school is that it is a microcosm of the type of society we wish to establish. See especially section 24. Schools must develop in students the desire to carry out value activities. This will include actively encouraging students to develop such things as mutual understanding, initiative and perseverance. It would also include encouraging the young to find powerful reasons for involving themselves in any action related to respecting cultural diversity, the environment and outer space.

Further, schools should develop in students a commitment to aiding development, to breaking down all forms of domination, whether political, economic, racial or cultural, to strengthening constructive ties of co-operation, to making a stand for equality, justice, peace and disarmament.

Further, "Values in Public Schools," section 24, declares that the public education systems must respond to the rights of all the young. This is the corollary, of course, of that. For this purpose, the state has a duty to ensure that all persons, without distinction of sex, creed, ethnic origin, culture, ability, economic or social background, have access to free secular schools.

In section 29, the system must be an avenue of emancipation for the young. It must not be a system of alienation or segregation, nor must it reproduce élites or protect power groups. Therefore, it must be democratic in its establishment of policy, its organization, control and practices. Evaluation of the system should be regular and critical. The system should maintain continuous contact with the social, economic and cultural environment.

Again, in section 30, accordingly, the public school system must model the practice of values in a free, open and inclusive manner. There must be no gap between the public school system's declared values and its practice of them.

The goal of public school systems, then, in all respects must be education of the highest quality. The Coalition for Public Education is firmly convinced that every effort should be made to develop and fund such improvements in personnel and program so that publicly funded education in Ontario can continue to provide and improve equitable opportunities for all. This should be done in such ways and with such means as will best guarantee the maintenance and improvement of mutual respect and harmonious relationships among all elements in Ontario's and Canada's increasingly pluralistic society.

This would mean that the publicly funded education systems of Ontario should be encouraged and, indeed, obliged to provide the kinds of educational environments, programs and opportunities for those involved in them that they may realize in microcosm, through their school societies, the macrocosmic ideals for society at large. It would mean that no special interest groups, no matter how defined, would be allowed to claim any special privileges or prerogatives for themselves to the detriment or deprivation of all.

If we wish our society to become more responsible and more democratic, then we need to teach and practise responsible democratic processes in the life of each school community without excluding any students, parents, teachers, administration or trustees from these obligations. If we wish to have a society in which individuals of diverse characteristics, backgrounds, gifts, attainments and value systems may live together with mutual regard and respect, then each school and school system should do its best to nurture such attitudes as mutual respect and willingness to co-operate harmoniously in a community within the school system, at least, which honours and models them.

Mr. Cribar: The area that I am to cover is extensive, so I am going to be jumping like a rock across water. I hope you are able to follow. I do hope that you will read the whole report, because it really is very important. I am going to be talking about streaming, grade promotion, semestering and OSIS and make brief comments.

To designate streaming as a contributing cause to school success or school failure or the problems of school dropouts tends to lead to unproductive oversimplifications which do not address the really fundamental issues about values in education. It especially fails to take into account the significance of those key personal relationships all along the way of the educational process, including those at home as well as those at school.

If you turn over to page 17, we were talking about OSIS. You are quite aware of what OSIS is, I am sure. Under OSIS, a student now requires 30 credits to graduate with an Ontario secondary school diploma. Ontario academic course credits can be included in these 30. If students are planning to proceed to a university program, they must complete at least six OACs. This is a significant change from the 27 formerly required for the OSSD, plus the six additional required for the Ontario secondary school honours graduation diploma. It has increased the number of obligatory subject credits from nine out of 27 to 16 out of 30 and has decreased the number of options.

Second, what places will values education, for example, have assigned for it within the OSIS framework? If commanding interests in society insist that the public school system turn out more economical and utilitarian products than formerly, what will happen to those subjects and processes to which it is more difficult to assign a bottom-line dollar value, with corrections for inflation, appreciation or depreciation over time?

What places will or can become available under the OSIS structures for such a subject, should it be included among those required, as religious education? Could or should not the Ministry of Education take action to establish equity of opportunity in nonconfessional religious education within the secondary school system of Ontario as a whole?

Some members of the Coalition for Public Education and many other individuals and organizations in society are convinced that the most appropriate places for religious instruction are primarily the homes of their faithful and their own institutions. Without prejudice to these convictions, the Coalition for Public Education is prepared to acknowledge that in a pluralistic society the social fabric will become increasingly stressed and may eventually be torn apart unless students are exposed to each others' beliefs and values with a view to understanding their bases and respecting their rights to their own religious beliefs and practices.

Thus, we request the development of religious education within a public setting, including our publicly funded school systems in Ontario's pluralistic society, which will help students to understand and reflect on what it means to be a religious person, to recognize the places that various religions have come to have in their respective communities and to develop some

appreciation of the roles and points of views of at least the world's major religions.

It is the coalition's policy, which we recommend respectfully to the select committee, the Ministry of Education and the government of Ontario, to work together to ensure that those forms of religious education now in effect in the province and those that may yet be developed and implemented in both of the publicly funded school systems in Ontario, treat all faiths with equity, with accuracy and with charity. This will help to guarantee that no one religion or denomination thereof, or membership therein, will be suggested to be or considered by implication to be either significantly advantaged or disadvantaged as such by the state, the general public and members of other faiths.

1710

Ms. Hunter: Our coalition recognizes that there are elements in society which would like to restore a medieval world view and that there are extreme forms of this in Ontario today. The Coalition for Public Education believes that our publicly funded education systems–both of those accountable to us–should begin to involve their students in a lifelong process of seeking the truth. Education should be for the liberation of persons and their societies from those prejudices, attitudes and habits which cramp their development and cripple their relationships.

We would like to underline that we feel, since both systems are publicly funded, that all of us have a duty to examine the curriculum in all the schools in Ontario directed to religious education. We acknowledge that no education system or religious faith has cornered the market on truth for itself. This would be, obviously, not an opinion shared by some of the religious groups that do have their own schools now.

Much has been said of the unique mission of the separate schools to provide a Catholic dimension. If you look at the idea of a Catholic dimension, this can suggest that this is somehow more valuable than the whole plethora of other religions and faith communities in Ontario today. Our membership at the Coalition for Public Education includes people who are Christian or Judaeo-Christian as well as other communities of faith.

We would like to remind the select committee, the government and the people of Ontario that the mandate of public education is universal. The public education system, as distinguished from the publicly funded separate school system, serves, and must continue to serve, the needs of all the people of Ontario. The public includes persons of all faiths, including Roman Catholics in many of the parts of the province, including where I happen to have my cottage, where there is no choice other than the public system.

We realize that any denominational or private school is sectarian. At its best, this can be an exciting educational experience for people involved in it, but many times it leads to an exclusivity and a sense of superiority that is undesirable in a pluralistic society. We maintain that the universal public education system in Ontario must continue to exercise the paramount role in the educational processes of this province and must have the primary claim on public resources for its maintenance and development.

I would particularly like to point out, in light of the recent court case on religious exercises, subsection 235(1) of the Education Act: "It is the duty of a teacher...(c) to inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the principles of Judaeo-Christian morality."

This is obviously a section that will need to be examined in light of the ruling and also in realization of how insensitive this is, arrogant and chauvinistic, considering the numbers of other faith groups in Ontario today.

Mr. McClintock: This has been a very fast canter through this paper and presentation. You have before you on pages 26 and 27 our specific recommendations. You might wish to take just a minute or so to read them through. They are specific to the points that we have made in the paper. I think they are really relevant to the improvement and the maintenance of the public education system.

We would invite you to ask your questions or to proceed with whatever discussion you would like. That is just 15 minutes, I guess.

Madam Chairman: You tried to cheat a little. I think it was 17 minutes, but that is close. I have it that we started at 4:58. Excuse me, I was just wondering if you perhaps would like to read your recommendations into the record.

Mr. McClintock: Yes. In our summation, therefore, the Coalition for Public Education would make the following recommendations for the consideration of the select committee for inclusion in the educational policies and practices of Ontario:

1. That the development of the highest personal potential of each individual be accorded top priority in the policies, programming and allocation of personnel and other resources in the publicly funded education systems of the province;

2. That as far as possible, schools and school systems be encouraged to become microcosms of the best macrocosmic Ontario society which can be conceived, rather than simply to reflect and perpetuate the status quo;

3. That high priority always be accorded to the enhancement of the quality of the individual student-teacher relation and to the reduction of the pupil-teacher ratios so that meaningful opportunities for creative interpersonal relationships may be increased;

4. That academic streaming remain a flexible technique available to assist the educational processes within larger groups or populations of students, but that wherever possible, those kinds of academic streaming which tend to lock the student into a particular educational option be avoided;

5. That subject promotion be retained and that grade promotion not be reinstated;

6. That semestering continue to be developed and utilized as one of the means by which more students may have access to more flexible alternatives in their educational program and progress;

7. That OSIS's provision for "values education across the curriculum" be enhanced and augmented where necessary and that religious education of a nonconfessional, undogmatic and irenic nature also be provided for, under criteria and parameters mutually acceptable to the various communities of faith involved in any way in the publicly funded educational systems of Ontario; and

8. That clause 235(1)(c) of the Education Act be redrafted to take into account the appropriate approaches to be used by educators, schools and school systems in accordance with the realities and needs of our pluralistic society, for example,

"(1) It is the duty of a teacher and a temporary teacher,

"(c) to encourage and nurture mutual understanding, respect and appreciation for the values and heritages of all persons in Canadian society whether actually represented in the individual school community or not.

Madam Chairman: We will now open up for questions from the members.

Mr. Reycraft: I must say before I get to my question that I appreciate the recommendation about removing subsection 235(1) from the Education Act. As someone who taught for over 20 years, I must confess that at times I suffered a bit of a guilty conscience at not being able to claim that I had advanced some of those virtues, particularly frugality, I think, but others as well. I do not think there is any doubt that section is archaic. I say that in a charitable sense.

You made reference in your presentation to the recent decision of the Court of Appeal relative to prayers and bible readings in the schools. Do I take it from what you said that you agree with the court's decision?

Mr. McClintock: I would say we certainly agree that whatever is done in the school should not be any way discriminatory. That was in part of the write-up, I believe, of the decision in the Globe and Mail. I have not seen the actual final text of their decision.

I served for a time on the Toronto Board of Education committee. I am still a consultant to them on their readings and prayers for use in the schools. Where it is necessary to continue to have some readings or prayers as required under the Education Act, then such a selection that acknowledges the fact that there are other faiths and that they have their prayers and traditions as well has merit.

Something appeared recently in l'Actualité, the magazine in French, for October, in which it says a priest and school board member say the school is not the best structure for religious formation. I could read it in French if you would prefer.

He said: "The teaching body is not a religious community and one should not entrust to it the charge of transmitting the faith. Protestants have already gone a long way ahead with their Sunday school. With the Catholics on one side and the Protestants on the other, it is an archaic or backward structure, contrary to the spirit of ecumenism, to carry on."

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While we have not discussed this last statement in the coalition, it would be compatible with the climate of our discussions. We do not see the imposition of the requirement of a prayer in school as something that necessarily contributes to either the religious observances or the religious commitment of those who are obliged to take part.

Mr. Reycraft: I appreciate the candour of your response.

I would like to go to one of the specific recommendations, the fourth one, about streaming. You say the system should retain streaming as a flexible technique to assist the educational processes within larger groups of the population, but that we should get away from any kind of streaming that locks students into a particular program.

As I have seen young people advance through grades 9, 10 and 11 and through secondary school, it is hard to envision a system that does both of those things, not because anybody or the system locks students into a particular stream, but because they do it to themselves. By the time students reach the end of grade 10 basic, their ability to take year-3 general-level or advanced-level courses is usually questionable.

Mr. McClintock: If I may respond, the business of streaming is not peculiar to the secondary school. It is first imposed very early in the elementary system, in kindergarten for that matter. You may have the bunnies, the puppies and the kitties or whatever. The little dears do not realize it too much then, but some of that labelling sticks with them in terms of other people's perceptions of their potential and their capabilities.

I had occasion to teach for a number of years in a vocational school, as well as in an academic high school later on. I have seen personally many situations where students who needed some extra remedial help and some motivation could move right out of vocational school into the next levels. Some, even with persistence, developed and were able to outperform many people who had gone through the more academic system. I mentioned Sir Winston Churchill. The lady before us mentioned Albert Einstein.

Certainly as a practising classroom teacher, grouping, even over an extended period of time, for a few hours, a few weeks or maybe a year, may be a helpful way of dealing with where children are at that particular time in their development. But if the label that is applied in grade 1 is allowed to stay on them for the rest of their lives, that kind of branding is reprehensible. We should not allow it to go on.

School board members will say this is the complaint of many of the people who perceive themselves as less advantaged in our society and who say: "Our children are slotted into opportunity room or vocational school and so on. Give them a break. Give them a chance." In many cases, if they are given a break and a chance, some of them do develop amazingly. This is why we say we are interested in the development of the highest human potential of each student, not just a select group.

Ms. Meaghan: May I pick up on that?

Mr. McClintock: Yes.

Ms. Meaghan: I was going to add that what many of these items have in common–streaming, promotions, the wellbeing of the student and preparing the student to enter the 21st century–is that these are really social issues and political issues as well as educational matters.

When we are looking at 80 per cent of students in the general stream who are failing and students from the Caribbean and some Greek and Portuguese students who are not doing as well as other students, whom I will not mention, this is not obviously a function of their ethnic or racial background. This is a class problem.

We would like to see the educational system provide equality of opportunity for growth and development for all students. To do that, we believe that, more and more, the educational system in the future must be linked to social services, much more so in my opinion than it should be linked to religion.

Speaking as a member of the fourth largest group in Ontario, the atheists, I am opposed to separate public schools that emphasize religious values, simply because religion is a secondary issue and will not solve some of the fundamental social, economic and cultural problems that face children, such as latchkey children, Tamil refugee children, children who come to school without proper clothing and so on and so forth.

We wish to have the public education system retain flexibility to pull students out and help them wherever possible with special tutorial opportunities, but on the other hand, we would certainly want the public school system to look at the provision of equality of opportunity of growth and development for all students.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you, Mr. McClintock, and your colleagues for coming before us today and for your contribution to our committee.

Mr. McClintock: Thank you for your interest and attention. We hope some of our recommendations will find their way along with yours.

The committee adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

ERRATUM

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Hansard
Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Organization of the Education Process

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First Session, 34th Parliament
Wednesday, October 12, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, October 12, 1988

The committee met at 10:07 a.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO
(continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open this session of the select committee on education as we continue our review of the organization of the educational process in Ontario.

We are pleased to welcome as our first presenters this morning the Ontario Family Studies Co-ordinators' Council. Come forward, please. Welcome to our committee. We are looking forward to hearing what you have to say today. I know Mrs. O'Neill in particular will be quite interested in the subject matter, since she has brought up family studies a number of times.

Please begin whenever you wish and start by introducing yourselves for the purposes of Hansard.

Mrs. Tweedy: I am tempted to say season's greetings this morning. I happen to come from Alliston, which had 10 centimetres of snow overnight. It may be a little premature, however.

Mrs. O'Neill: Mrs Tweedy comes from my father's and grandfather's birthplace.

Mrs. Tweedy: It is a great spot, except when it snows.

I am Jan Tweedy, chairman of the Ontario Family Studies Co-ordinators' Council. To my right is Beth Brady, vice-chairman of the Ontario Family Studies Co-ordinators' Council. To my left is Jean McLafferty, past chairman.

Mrs. O'Neill: You have that great shirt on again this morning, Richard.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Call me red.

Madam Chairman: We did not know you had defected.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a symbol for the vanishing Liberals. Hard to believe with all you guys over there.

Mr. Keyes: Fairy-tale prospects.

Madam Chairman: I think it is wishful thinking on your part, Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Keyes: No, politics.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am here to keep you awake.

Madam Chairman: We apologize to our presenters. We are getting late in our sessional hearings, so we are getting somewhat punchy, I believe.

Mrs. Tweedy: I understand this is the last day or the second-last day.

Mr. Keyes: It is the second-last day.

Mrs. Tweedy: Close to the end.

ONTARIO FAMILY STUDIES CO-ORDINATORS' COUNCIL

Mrs. Tweedy: We are here representing the co-ordinators of family studies in 39 boards across Ontario. My two colleagues and myself prepared a brief which you have received and I trust you have had the opportunity to peruse. I will not read the brief; I would rather clarify and expand upon some of the ideas in it.

As you may have noted, the brief addresses only one issue that the select committee is looking at, namely, the compulsory subjects in OSIS. It is in this one area that a response specific to family studies was appropriate.

What role does Ontario, through its education system, have in ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills and attitudes for quality family life today and in the future? If you examine the current compulsory list of subjects under OSIS, you may well say that it has no role. I would like to explain why our group strongly disagrees with that position.

The family is the most enduring social institution in all of society. Throughout history it has taken many forms, from sex, to clans, to tribes, to extended family to nuclear family. It has been polygamous; it has been monogamous; it has been patriarchal and matriarchal. But despite all the changes this institution has undergone, it has survived and still today has a vital function to play in the wellbeing of every individual.

Two or three decades ago when we spoke of a family, we were generally referring to a nuclear family--husband and wife with children living under one roof, protectively encased in a broader, extended family which was close at hand, offering support and training. This is the

situation that existed throughout the first half of the 20th century and a situation which was just beginning to change when HS1 was being written.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the situation continued to change with increasing rapidity. When OSIS was written, the changing nature of the family and the resulting needs for education were not reflected with any equity in the list of compulsory subjects. It appeared as though the authors did not see how the changing countenance of the family impacted directly upon education. It is now time to face that situation squarely and to correct an oversight that occurred at that time.

Today there are four, not one, family patterns common in North America: families of first marriage, families of remarriage, single-parent families and common law families. Within these four family patterns, there are many factors affecting how the family functions and operates. Divorce continues to be a common part of relationships and relationship patterns, followed frequently by remarriage and step-parenting. By the year 2000, it is expected that 25 per cent of all children will spend part of their lives in a one-parent family. How does this information affect education?

Families of yesteryear taught their young how to function in families based on their own experience. Unfortunately, the experience of grandparents and parents is so different from the current situation that the family cannot extract a great deal of knowledge from their past experience to apply to the present or to the future.

Our grandparents did not need to know how to recognize the symptoms of substance abuse among their sons and daughters. They did not have to instruct their sexually active teenagers in methods of protecting themselves from acquired immune deficiency syndrome, nor did they have to concern themselves about how to get a healthy, balanced diet when one of every three meals is eaten outside the home. The parents of today and tomorrow must be able to do so.

Students at family studies experience interactive learning in which they develop decision-making, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills vital to functioning in today's world and today's families, skills which apply not only to their personal lives but also to higher education and work experience. What evidence is there that the study of families should be included in the school curriculum? Are not today's families coping?

One of every four Canadian women living today will be sexually abused. Family violence continues to increase among all walks of life. Recently, a highly successful businessman who had all the academic training necessary to function in the business world failed as a husband and a father because he resorted to physical violence. His case was a very public case, but it was not the only case.

Society has responded to the increase in family violence with firefighting rather than prevention techniques. Protective homes to which children and wives can escape when they are being abused are apparent in communities across the province. Legislation has made it mandatory for teachers to report suspected abuse among their students. Is it not now time to investigate ways in which we can prevent such abuse? Research clearly indicates that parenting programs are effective as tools in reducing child abuse and neglect. For example, if a parent knows what is age-appropriate behaviour for his child, he will not experience the frustration of expecting the child to accomplish a task or behave in a manner that is not developmentally reasonable.

Family studies curriculum teaches essential content for any person planning on becoming a parent or pursuing a career in working with children. Not only do students acquire knowledge but also they have many opportunities to work with young children and to develop skills and attitudes to effectively apply that knowledge. Students need to learn to function effectively as individuals and as family members in their current and future roles.

"Surely it is the responsibility of the family to instruct in such matters," you say. The reality is that the family needs help. Just as we no longer expect fathers to apprentice their sons in a trade or mothers to teach their daughters all the reading and writing skills they will need in later life, it is equally archaic to expect the family to teach their offspring all the decision-making, communication and problem-solving skills they must have to function well in a family context and in an environment of change.

The newspapers are full of stories of families in difficulty, not because they do not want to do a good job but because they often do not have the skills and knowledge they need to do a good job in today's world. It is my responsibility and it is your responsibility to see the struggles families are facing and to assess the impact of those struggles on the children in our schools.

Ask an elementary teacher how many students arrive at class each day without an adequate

breakfast or a proper amount of rest. Find out how many 8-to 10-year-olds go home to an empty house at the end of each school day unsupervised. Visit a grade 11 or 12 class and ask the students what they have ingested–eaten, drunk and smoked–in the last two or three days. Ask the one of every 10 teenage females who has become pregnant if she consciously wanted a baby and if she had plans for how she was going to support the child physically and emotionally. Consider the report of George Radwanski on school dropouts and note that he says one common characteristic of many dropouts was family problems.

Skills for making sound decisions and solving problems at a personal and family level must be taught. By the year 2000, 70 per cent of all married women will be in the workforce. This means that while families might have more money, they will have less time to teach their young, less time to pass on the wisdom of their experiences and to prepare their offspring for future family roles.

The schools of Ontario have a responsibility to see that this knowledge does not go untaught. The government of Ontario can validate the institution of the family and the vital role it plays in our society by mandating that every student in Ontario has the study of the family in the curriculum. If we can see the need for AIDS education for the prevention of AIDS, can we not see the need for family studies education for the prevention of further stress and malfunctioning in the family unit?

I would like to refer you to page 4, sections 2.2 and 2.3, of the brief to outline for you what the aims in courses in family studies are. All courses in family studies from grade 7 to the Ontario academic course are designed to give the students an understanding of the nature and functions of the family in its capacity as physical, social, cultural, spiritual, emotional, economic and aesthetic environment within society; an understanding of the relationships within the family and the effect of these relationships on the wellbeing of family members; an understanding of the interaction of the family with other systems; an understanding of and an ability to use basic problem-solving, decision-making and human interaction skills within the context of the family; an understanding of how values, attitudes, preferences and beliefs influence the use of decision-making, problem-solving and human interaction skills within the family.

Chart 2.3 outlines the courses that are available in family studies. At grades 7 and 8, family studies is an introduction to the discipline as a whole. In grade 7, they look at families in our community, families in the past and families in the future. In grade 8, they look at the family environments and have an overview of all courses in family studies coming in the secondary school.

From grades 9 to 12, the student can focus on one specific aspect of family decision-making and family maintenance to study in depth, so they may study food, clothing, parenting, housing or economics in the family. Throughout the study of those specific areas, they will be developing decision-making, problem-solving and communication skills that can be applied to a broader context. The OAC course, families in Canadian society, prepares a student for higher education in the social sciences. In this program, the student will look at the current state of the family, selected issues that the family has to deal with, historical and cultural perspectives and future trends in the family at each stage throughout the family life cycle.

It is because we are family studies educators with years of university training in the study of family, with years of working with social agencies in our communities who are saying, "Strengthen the family and foster healthy families through education," and with years of experience working with students who are hungry for knowledge immediately relevant to their happiness and wellbeing as family members, that we come before you with the recommendations in section 4 of the brief.

When the new OSIS compulsory list is published, we believe, as the minimum requirement, it must include one compulsory credit in family studies and the retention of the current compulsory social science senior division credit. The study of the family must be shown to be valued by listing family studies as a social science in grades 7 and 8 and increasing the hours allotted to it to make it equitable with the other social sciences at grades 7 and 8. The formal study of the family, we believe, should begin in grade 1, with appropriate programs and ministry support documents being developed.

It is recognized that these recommendations will require consideration of what is needed to help teachers gain the qualifications necessary to teach family studies. In addition to the current teacher training centres at the University of Western Ontario and the University of Toronto and for francophone teachers at the University of

Ottawa and Laurentian University, centres should be established at the University of Windsor, Brock University, Queen's University and York University. Continued teacher support can be facilitated by having two education officers with family studies expertise in the central region of the ministry and one for each of the regional offices. These are our recommendations for your consideration.

In conclusion, we find it impossible to believe that in this time of housing shortages and elderly poverty, family violence and child abuse and day care shortage, obesity and an increasing incidence of heart disease and lifestyle-related illnesses, stress and unemployment, etc., a responsible Liberal government would fail to hear our offer to help the young people of Ontario. Give us one compulsory credit in family studies and we will promise to provide the leadership and support necessary to equip today's youth with the skills they need in order to function well in a family context and to manage their own family life in a climate of societal, cultural, technological and scientific change.

Thank you. My colleagues and I will attempt to answer any questions you might have.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation, Jan. We do have a number of members who have indicated they have questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It does seem strange that you would have to do this major preamble to your presentation today sort of justifying why family studies is required in 1988. I remember when we were dealing with questions of spousal abuse in 1982, the council made a presentation to us suggesting all sorts of change that should be brought into the school system to assist in ameliorating the problems of family violence, and most of those suggestions, unfortunately, have not found their way in. It is kind of sad that in politics there are many déjà vus of things which do not get done. I am sorry that you have to make the same arguments in favour of your position.

Can I get some information about what has happened to family studies in the last little while, because even at that stage, in 1982, as I recall there was a concern about a lack of takeup, and that was pre-OSIS, in family studies. What is your membership at the moment, for instance? Are there declining enrolments in family studies as a result of OSIS and other factors? Can you just give us a sort of picture of what is happening at the moment? What boards do not have major family studies components and things like that?

Mrs. Tweedy: I think that across the province, family studies has felt the impact of OSIS, particularly in the intermediate division. Truly, in many schools the course offerings are structured in such a manner that it is almost impossible for students to fit family studies into their course selection in grades 9 and 10.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are there boards which are doing better than others? As I recall, back in those older days, the area west of Metro seemed to have a pretty good concentration of family studies. I cannot remember whether it was Halton or Mississauga or both. There were other areas where almost nothing was being done at a board level. Can you give us some kind of profile on that basis and on what it was like around the province in terms of the boards' attitudes toward family studies?

Ms. McLafferty: Very often it depends on there being a consultant in the board. Not always, but if there is a consultant who represents family studies, then generally the program does better and there are more students in the program than in boards that do not have that type of emphasis. Even within Toronto, even within Peel or York, you will find differences in the school structure depending on how the school structures those compulsory credits for the students to take.

For example, we had one high school that suggested a family studies half-credit course as not a mandatory course but it was highly recommended, and just about every student in grade 9 took it. But that was only one school. So it depends very much on the principal and the attitude towards family studies in the board.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of the things that is happening is the number of groups from various perspectives which are coming to ask us for more compulsory subjects in their area; so we can add you to the list, if you want to be cynical about this.

Interjection.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is right. We are up to around 60 now, not to be facetious about this, because I think there is a qualitative difference between what you are suggesting and additional programming, and maybe it comes down to how we are looking at education in general, what its role really is in terms of preparation for work or for other kinds of living and the problems kids are going to face in the future, and which they are facing now, as far as that goes.

One of the suggestions that came up yesterday –we have had similar suggestions, but this went further–was for restructuring of grades 9 and 10

out of the present OSIS mode to have that much more of a core curriculum during that period. The Ontario Federation of Labour yesterday was suggesting, although it did not define it to include family studies–it would be interesting to know what its opinion was on that–that we have a much broader-based curriculum in grades 9 and 10 and that it be a mandatory curriculum. I think that would be a fair interpretation of what they were suggesting and that therefore things like family studies could be made part of that mandatory base that any child would have to come out of the intermediate division with. Could I have your response to that first?

There is another thing I want to know about. It seems to me that family studies can be a bridging of various disciplines to prepare people for life and not just within the family but with all the connections between family and society. In that way, hands-on experience, day care centres in the schools and family studies departments co-ordinating activity with children's aid societies and others might be a very important structural change we might look at within our school system–it is a much larger and broader question. I know I will not get an extra question. I wonder if you could deal with those two things.

Mrs. Tweedy: In the proposal of building core programs in grades 9 and 10, were they suggesting that one teacher teach the whole course?

1030

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No, they did not actually go to that degree, and it was one of the questions I wanted to ask them, because they seemed to still like specialization, which in some ways was running counter to some of their other philosophical perspectives. Others, however, have been suggesting that we reduce the number of teachers in grades 9 and 10 to make the adjustment from one or two teachers at grades 7 and 8 a little easier for those students. In that way, there would be more generalists, but I do not think anybody is suggesting that we get away from specialty altogether at the 9 and 10 level. I have not heard that yet, I do not think.

Mrs. Tweedy: My initial response to that would be that a core program may be appropriate for grades 9 and 10. I think attention has to be paid, though, to who teaches the subjects that are being delivered. Students come through our system from kindergarten to grade 8 with one teacher or two or three teachers, and perhaps by grade 9 they are ready for a different format of learning and can benefit from being exposed to a number of different teaching and learning styles and by being exposed to specialists in a specific area rather than generalists.

Mrs. Brady: In addition to that, in the secondary panel where teachers are specialists in their subject, I think there would be some concern about having one or two teachers teach all subjects in terms of the delivery of the curriculum. That would be a concern.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Nobody is suggesting a lot of massive retraining, I should say that. That would be belittling what those people are suggesting, but points have come forward on that.

Ms. McLafferty: We would agree, however, that there is an existing, already overcrowded curriculum and that really does need to be assessed. We are just saying that when you assess it, we really feel that subjects that prepare kids for life are just as important as the three Rs and very often that is forgotten.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What about the structural change that you–

Mrs. Tweedy: Could you restate that for me?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: More and more, I am beginning to think we need to think of a structural change within the school to make the linkages between society and the school more clear-cut. We are doing it in terms of work now with more co-op programs in industry and getting businesses in to adopt schools and all that kind of thing.

But in terms of the school being the place where kids are seen for 13 years and no other agency gets to do that, it seems to me that it may be better to have the school as a focus for co-ordinating other kinds of support service to kids, and also then making them aware of what is out there, in terms of extending co-op education much more into social services, day care and that kind of thing, all working through the school, understanding how parenting fits in with other kinds of philosophical approaches to life. I was just wondering if you see that evolving, structurally, or have you thought much about that.

Mrs. Tweedy: Family studies as a discipline is very involved in co-operative education and has been for a number of years. In fact, before, it was called co-operative education, and that began by sending students out to work in day care centres, elementary schools, child treatment centres and that type of thing. Now placements are expanded to include placements in nursing homes, working in the field of gerontology, working in the food industry, the fashion industry, working in careers related to housing

and careers related to social work. So there are very strong linkages between family studies and co-operative education.

I think there are creative ways you can look at strengthening the link between community and school. Within my own board, there are a number of licensed day care centres within the school which are not owned by the board, they rent space and operate within the school, which are also available for practical experiences for students of specific courses to work in. So that provides a very strong onsite placement.

Also, that same principle can be extended to the whole field of gerontology, where a family studies learning centre could establish an afternoon program or a morning program for the seniors in the community and they could come in and work within the school for a multigenerational, intergenerational type of program.

One aspect of that which I have explored within my own board is the possibility of having students who are instructed or doing a placement in gerontology in a nursing home have a little classroom right in that nursing home, so that part of their instruction could be delivered on site. That is something that has not come to fruition, but it indicates the direction in which we are thinking in terms of strengthening that link between family studies and the community.

I think I mentioned in this preamble that family studies educators tend to have fairly strong links with the social agencies in the community. That may mean being involved in committees within the community, interagency committees which have representatives from children's aid and the Red Cross and all of those. The linkage is there and it could certainly be developed and strengthened.

Mrs. Brady: To add to that, I would also offer that at the Ontario academic course level, when students are undertaking an independent study project, quite often when they look at social issues they have an opportunity to become involved in intercommunity agencies as well.

Mr. Jackson: I appreciate the reference to the OAC, but a project which we undertook in the Halton board, and we had to fight to do it, was our at-risk students project. We found that at the other end of the spectrum, an area which is a major focus of my concern, we were mandating for high-risk students and supervised alternative learning for excused pupils, to do the volunteer work assignments interrelated with the family studies teacher, because we did not have guidance supports.

We had to use the family studies teacher in a guidance mode and link the student to the day care experience in any neighbouring school or home school. We used that teacher for the reporting linkage. We were doing that eight years ago because the volunteer experience would be somewhere way off in the community. The kid would be offsite and would not know where he was. But for those high-risk students, this also presented itself as a great opportunity to retain a student and keep him or her in that mode.

I know you did not mean to focus on the OACs intentionally, but there is that whole group of high-risk students who can be motivated to seek out careers in the social service field, in that whole general area. I thought I would mention that there is some very exciting developmental work there.

The problem that I saw, and you may want to comment on this, is male-dominated school boards who refuse to deal with pilot projects for day care labs in schools. We have fought that in our board. We actually even had a community school and they refused to put in a day care centre because they felt it was not within the school board's mandate. That still exists to this day in this province–I know that–in spite of what the Liberal government has stated.

Mr. Ballinger: Only in Halton.

Mr. Jackson: No. Mr. Mather is coming up here next from Durham and he is aware. We fought for years to get day care labs in our schools, and even when the government of the day was providing incentive money, but it was a very male-dominated board and it was very hard to tear down those notions.

They did not even have lunch programs in our board when I first got elected. That exists to this day around this province. I wonder what role your group is playing in terms of tearing down those barriers. There is one consultant who is fighting to retain her position and they generally do not lead the charge to change the board's attitude in this area.

Mrs. Tweedy: Each board, I guess, solves that dilemma in its own way. Some boards have found a solution that is very comfortable for them, in which they do not have to be the owner of the day care. The day care is community based, nonprofit or it may be a private organization.

I think often the initiative comes, not even at the consultant level, but at the teacher level, where the teacher is saying, "I want a practical experience in this school for these students." Therefore, they make a proposal to the board,

through their consultants, to look at ways of providing that. It may not always be licensed day care. It may be a pilot project of a nursery-school-type activity that runs mornings for three weeks or something like that, but it would be an onsite practicum that allows the students to become involved and to work with children.

Ms. McLafferty: I would like to add that I am in a growing board where day care centres are being added to new schools. The plan is that those day care centres will be leased, but that the school, particularly the family studies program, will have the opportunity to link into that day care program.

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Mr. Jackson: Madam Chairman, you give me this look that I can ask one more quick question if I am quick.

Madam Chairman: I think you misinterpreted that look, actually.

Mr. Jackson: Then you should not have given me that look.

I guess I get angry when we hear about day care centres in new schools when in fact there is a compelling argument for schools with declining enrolments to use that crisis of declining enrolments and redefine the terms of the use of those schools. There are some very exciting opportunities.

If you look at declining enrolment areas and their technical situation, because you have developed those programs, that might help to inject additional bodies into a school. I am looking for school boards that are saying this is across the board. Every school should be eligible, every community has the value in that. I know you did not mean to imply that–

Ms. McLafferty: No, I did not.

Mr. Jackson: –because it was mandated by a government, new schools will have a space for it. I am anxious to hear boards and to hear advocacy that we are looking at these across the board in all secondary schools and most elementary schools.

Mrs. Tweedy: North York has certainly gone very much forward in that direction. The request for the day care is not at the initiative of the board, but at the initiative of the community in which that school is located. North York provides people. Outside of family studies, there is a child care department unit in North York which is responsible for facilitating the establishment of a day care in a school when the community builds a case for the need for that day care in that community.

I think that is a very critical issue, that the community and all the current day cares that are existing do not see the day care in the school as a threat to their clientele and to their business. I think it is important that the initiative comes from the community.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Jackson. After you misinterpreted my last look, you will note I am not looking in your direction at all.

Mr. Jackson: I am not looking at you either. I do not want a new look.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. O'Neill.

Mrs. O'Neill: I may just say that you had better be careful because you may not know what political activity may follow. My very first political act in 1959, in addition to voting, was to present a brief on behalf of family studies at Queen's Park. That was the first year I taught. I will never forget it. I cannot remember the subject of the brief, but I remember the excitement of coming to Queen's Park to present a brief.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: She has a very good background.

Mrs. O'Neill: Away back.

Mr. Ballinger: And 30 years later you made it.

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes, with lots of interesting things in between.

I really appreciate your statement about specialists, because I really do believe that is one of the difficulties with family studies in some areas of this province: some people who have not been qualified have been asked to teach the subject.

There has been a great difference in the way in which that kind of thing has been supervised since I began teaching. As you know, when the provincial inspectors were removed from the classroom, a whole new kind of evaluation of the subject area, particularly your subject area, took place. There were many superintendents across this province who had never been inside a family studies room and, all of a sudden, that became their responsibility. You can understand the difficulties that these superintendents, usually men, had in assuming this role.

That being said, I am very happy with the tone of your brief and the way you couched verbally what you had presented to us in writing. I may say a couple of things. You suggest how interested people in the school community are in your subject area. I would like to give an example. I have been going to professional

development days in many capacities for 30 years. When there is any subject about stress or family development or family values, the room is packed. These are people across the subject area. They are not necessarily home or family studies environment teachers or even social science teachers. But people want to know how to deal with their own lives. These people are in standing-room-only situations, and I have seen it over and over again.

When you talk about the program in grade 1 and onwards, I feel we should really take strong note of that, and particularly in areas–and I am sorry Mr. Johnston has left–where we do have poverty, because there are so many ways in which teachers could be better prepared to help those children. Many of them develop from your subject area, breakfast programs, not necessarily breakfast programs that are food in the school but teaching children how they can get a good breakfast even if they have to do it themselves. I know that is happening in some communities.

I guess what I would ask is that you continue to work in that area. I guess what you are asking for is, as we have talked about English across the curriculum, you are talking about family studies across the curriculum. That could easily, with a bit of imagination and creativity, be incorporated certainly into the faculties of education in preparation of primary teachers.

I have only one question for you. From your perspective, boys or males are now entering the subject area. Do you see that happening broadly? How do you see it changing the subject area? I am just interested. I do not think we yet have a male family studies teacher, do we?

Ms. McLafferty: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: We do? Good.

Mr. Keyes: I would hope so.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would hope so too, but I did not know it had happened. Could you tell us a little bit about the male influence in the subject area?

Ms. McLafferty: We also have a male family studies co-ordinator.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is that right? I am very happy to hear that. I know there are many men supervising families studies, but I did not know there were any who were truly qualified.

Mrs. Tweedy: I think the issues of equity are very high in curriculum development in our boards–not just sex equity but age equity, race equity and multicultural equity. That is a very high priority in developing curriculum and delivering curriculum to our clientele.

There are many factors that affect a male's decision about whether or not to take family studies. There are many pressures outside of the school that affect that decision. Sometimes it is family pressures. The education has to begin at home. Often it is peer pressure and societal pressure, but certainly within my own board, particularly from grade 7 to grade 10, we have about an even split of males and females in the courses. Then again, in grade–

Mrs. O'Neill: Has that changed the courses?

Mrs. Tweedy: Yes, certainly it has had to change the courses.

Mrs. O'Neill: Could you say a little bit about that for the record, please, just very briefly?

Mrs. Tweedy: In terms of how it has changed the courses?

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes.

Mrs. Tweedy: I think the content of the course is developed in a manner recognizing that the course has both females and males in it. The delivery of the course has certainly altered, and the teacher is cognizant of appealing to both a male and a female clientele. That is reflected in the teaching strategies used, the language used, the illustrative materials used and the textbooks used to a great degree–all those resource materials.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is all kept up, is it? You feel it is all kept up? The resources are there for that kind of presentation?

Mrs. Tweedy: Yes. I am not dissatisfied with the resources in that respect. I think attention has been paid to that issue because that has been an issue for family studies educators for decades. It is not a current issue; it is an issue that is constantly being addressed. I think now we are seeing some benefits of having addressed it.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think you are right. Thank you very much. Keep up the good work.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to Mr. Keyes, I will pass on a message from Mr. Jackson. He apologizes that he and his colleague had to leave. Apparently, there has been an emergency caucus meeting called by the Conservative Party. He wished me to convey his regrets not only to you but to the following presenters that he would not be able to be here. We hope you will be understanding in that regard.

Mr. Keyes: I must ask a couple of questions, not to be argumentative but to put you thinking again. You did make a very tall commitment to society publicly, which is noted for Hansard. You said, "Give us one compulsory subject in

family studies and we will equip young people to meet the challenges of the future." That is paraphrasing, but at least that is what I heard.

I think you are making more of a commitment than you can ever possibly hope to gain out of one course in family studies, because I think that the whole business of preparation of young people, as we have been studying for the last seven weeks, is the whole accumulation of a variety of types of courses. We can prepare them to a degree, more or less, quite adequately with a lot of different ways of getting to that. I think you go out too far on a limb, perhaps, to make that type of commitment.

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I wondered if you brought with you this morning the copy of the guidelines. I had great pleasure spending many years with family studies and what used to be home economics, and what used to be industrial arts is now technical studies, etc. I have always had a bit of a concern in the direction that I knew the course was moving, and it is amplified here on page 4. I have seen more or less the move to the sociological aspect of family studies and a dropping of any of the practical aspects. It is fine to teach young people to understand some of their family relationships and why there are many different types of family relationship, but the practical aspect was really one of those parts that I found, teaching in a large inner-city school, became very helpful to those young people, boys and girls. In my area I pioneered, had the audacity to mix all of our family studies and technical ones with boys and girls who did a half a year at each, and that gave them a lot of the type of preparation that was very beneficial to them so that they did learn how to perhaps get their own breakfast, lunch and many other things.

I am concerned in that regard and I want to give you a bit of a justification, because you do say also on page 7 that inherent in your recommendations is the understanding that the linking of family studies, industrial arts–and that is kind of using old cliché names; you have not used the up-to-date name–is no longer appropriate because of basic philosophical differences. I presume that if I read your guidelines I will better understand what you are now considering to be basic philosophical differences. I would challenge you that both programs had somewhat of the same philosophical approach to it, and that is the equipping of young people for living in today's society.

Mrs. Tweedy: Family studies is a social science. I believe that is a base from which we deliver our program.

Mr. Keyes: Have many of you moved in that direction yet? I mean, the guidelines were 1987. Have many of you moved that way?

Ms. McLafferty: Yes. That is the direction in which family studies has been moving since the 1974 and 1978 guidelines. It is not a sudden change of direction. I am sure that the roots for that movement go prior to 1974.

The concern about the absence of practical experiences in family studies is somewhat unfounded. Students of family studies in many courses will still have many opportunities for practical, hands-on learning. The purpose of that learning has been expanded and modified somewhat. We are not just teaching a skill for the purpose of them acquiring that skill, but we are teaching the skill for the purpose of them applying other critical skills that are essential to the whole functioning of the family.

In a situation in a food lab where they are doing a practical experience, in the 1960s guideline the purpose of that lab might have been to create a good food product. That was the sole purpose. Today we are trying to equip them with the information they need to make decisions around food. Is it really good use of their time to make this product? What decision-making and problem-solving skills do they have to manipulate and apply in order to go from point A to point B in that process? How is their food pattern in their family going to be different from the food pattern in their parents' family when current statistics say that one of every three family meals is eaten outside the home? How is that going to affect the foods they buy, their consumption of food, their spending patterns, the equipment they need at home? We have expanded the perspective, but family studies is still very concerned about active learning and interactive learning. Therefore, practicum projects, as they relate not just to foods but to parenting, housing, economics and all those areas, are a critical part of our guideline.

Mrs. Brady: I would like to add that the guidelines specify for a number of the courses, specifically depending on whether it is an advanced-level program, general-level or basic, the components or percentage that should be theoretical and the percentage that should be practical.

Mr. Keyes: You do not have the guideline there?

Mrs. Brady: No, we do not have an extra copy.

Mr. Keyes: Fine, I will pick up one.

Mrs. Tweedy: It is 40 in basic and alters with the level of difficulty.

Mrs. Brady: Yes, it alters, given the level of difficulty.

Mr. Keyes: I think it is unfortunate, then. Frankly, we have asked for so many more compulsory courses that we are probably not going to be advocating more compulsory courses. I find it unfortunate. I would predict that we will see a lessening of students taking what I consider a very important aspect of the curriculum: family studies. I am sure that if you gave us the numbers in real terms, your teachers in the field have diminished quite dramatically. In fact, it was very difficult in the 1970s, in our area, to find qualified teachers to teach in the field of family studies. Your numbers have probably dwindled and will continue to do so, which I think is a tragedy in the education system.

Mrs. Tweedy: I think that in growing boards, like the two boards on either side of me, your statements are probably not valid. In boards that are suffering declining enrolment, as my own board is, every discipline has lost teachers, including family studies. Family studies has lost more teachers at the grade 9 and 10 levels because of OSIS.

Mr. Keyes: But making one course compulsory will not salvage the day.

Mrs. Tweedy: It will assist. I think we said in our presentation that that is what we felt was the absolute minimal requirement. We would like to see family studies compulsory throughout. I do not think that is reasonable, given your framework.

Mr. Keyes: Never mind. It has been years, up to 60, or close to that.

Madam Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the council for your presentation to us today. Some of the comments you have made were echoed at an earlier time by the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children, but you have also introduced a number of new ideas, so we thank you for that.

Our next presentation will be from the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Could you come forward, please?

Good morning. Welcome to our committee. We have allocated one half hour for your presentation time and are hoping there might be at least half that time left for members' questions. Please begin whenever you wish. Would you start by introducing yourself for the purposes of Hansard?

YORK REGION ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Virgilio: My name is Joe Virgilio. I am the vice-chairman of the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board. On my far left is Frank Bobesich, our director of education, and on my immediate left is Avis Glaze, who is our superintendent of secondary schools.

Our board is pleased to make a presentation to this select committee on education. We view it as important to the education system in Ontario and we hope we will have some input into your decision-making.

I would like to introduce to you our director of education, Frank Bobesich.

Mr. Bobesich: Thank you, Mr. Virgilio. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We are pleased for the opportunity to spend a few moments with you this morning in response to your task of gathering information that may assist you in future directions with regard to your four major areas of studies: namely, streaming, grade promotion, semestering and OSIS.

Our brief not only responds to those four broad areas but in fact includes two additional areas of concern to ourselves: namely, the issue of students' part-time employment, especially at the secondary level, of course, and, as a separate school board, the issue of religious education certification for staff we need to hire for separate school boards. Those are appended in our brief.

I would like to point out that York region borders Metro Toronto immediately to the north. For those of you who do not know, it is probably the fastest-growing school board in Ontario. We currently have some 33,000 students housed in 55 schools, six of which are secondary schools.

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I raise that point not so much by way of lobbying for additional funds to provide additional facilities which we desperately need as to point out that that growth is causing a bit of a teacher shortage in our particular jurisdiction, especially in some specialized areas.

Notwithstanding that, I still hold and agree to some of the recommendations that have been raised in the current study or review of teacher education in Ontario that was commissioned by the Ministry of Education and conducted by Fullan and Connelly, in which they raise several substantial issues regarding teacher training as well as provide a series of related recommendations. On the one hand, we are suffering a current and undoubtedly future teacher shortage, and on the other hand, we have the recommendations set

forth in that study for future teacher education reform.

To put this in the context of our draft and our task for the moment–your task–you will note that there are a good number of recommendations that we present in our document that are predicated on an assumption or a hope or a fact that there will be improvement in the area of teacher training at both the pre-service and in-service levels. We cannot possibly advance some of these recommendations with any kind of integrity or hope for success without addressing that fundamental need of teacher training, because regardless of what innovation you may advance or what policy statements may emerge in the future, ultimately the implementation and/or the success of any such initiative rests squarely on the shoulders of the classroom teacher.

I submit to you that school boards cannot be singularly charged or held responsible for providing all the necessary teacher training that is emerging in relation to current social issues. I do not think education is the cause of or the singular saviour of all the social ills.

So I should like to put or ask you to put your study in a broader context. Not only are several of our recommendations tied clearly into improved teacher training at the pre-service and in-service levels, but they also assume and call for greater collaboration and co-operation among other ministries, not just the Ministry of Education but clearly the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, as well as the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Labour.

I think it is healthy and I think it is a good idea to look critically at education periodically, although we did undergo a rather critical look just a few years ago with the inception of OSIS. I simply ask you, in this renewed look, that you not so much implicate but, rather, clearly invite other ministries to participate in whatever educational reforms you may wish to advance over future years and not lay the responsibility solely on the shoulders of the Ministry of Education or respective school boards.

Having said that, I should like Dr. Glaze to highlight some of our report and then respond to questions you may have.

Dr. Glaze: Thank you, Mr. Bobesich. I think I would like just briefly to make a summary statement on each of those areas and then to highlight the recommendations.

First of all, on streaming, we have stated that we cannot, as a board, ignore the evidence that there is on streaming stating, of course, that streaming is quite detrimental to the achievement of many students, and we have quoted a number of research studies in our brief.

What I would like to highlight, though, is that in reading closely some of the main researches in the area of streaming–for example, Goodlad and Oakes–one notices that in at least two of them that had excellent results for students, both remedial, average students and accelerated students, the teachers in the study had received special training at Johns Hopkins University in the area of co-operative learning.

The point I am making here is that any attempts to change the status quo should be accompanied by teacher preparation and in-service initiatives. The recommendations that we have made are, I would say, middle-of-the-road recommendations, primarily because we do not want to suggest any initiatives which at the moment could end up being more detrimental than what we have already, so we are saying that students of all ability levels should be unstreamed in grades 9 and 10. I think you have heard that probably ad nauseam at this stage.

We are also recommending either a reduction in the number of levels of difficulty to possibly two for students in the senior grades in recognition of the specialized skills that university- and college-bound students require and those that are required for students entering the workforce. There should be provisions for students with special needs. We are saying we could gladly accept a fairly unstreamed situation for the majority of students, but even with this situation, we would like some special consideration given for the approximately five per cent of students who are gifted and approximately five per cent of students who are intellectually challenged and who would need specialized assistance. I know this view is also advocated by one of our best curriculum specialists in Ontario, namely, Dr. David Pratt.

We have mentioned also issues related to teacher education, and in a discussion of streaming we would also like to say that we favour school organizations such as comprehensive schools which educate students of all ability levels as well as those for physical and intellectual challenges.

On the question of grade promotion, we have also presented research on this topic. One of the researchers in this area concluded, after examining numerous research reports, that if, as is often the purported case today, the retention of pupils is accompanied with the intention of improving

the academic achievement and the basic skills of these pupils, the research does not seem to support this practice. It seems that retained pupils fall behind during the year that they are retained and spend the rest of their academic career in a vain attempt to catch up.

The credit system, as you know, was instituted to accommodate the individual needs of students. It is therefore consistent with the philosophy of providing for individual differences, and this system provides the opportunity for students to progress at their own rate, to repeat a single course if they are unsuccessful.

Administrators within the York Region Separate School Board support unanimously the concept of credits, especially for senior students. A common curriculum would not be suitable for students who are preparing to pursue various careers in the applied sciences, for example, the social sciences, the arts and technological studies at the senior division level. We can support a common curriculum in grades 9 and 10.

We are also suggesting that new methodologies or new models of teaching be invoked in a sense to make sure that students all achieve minimum competencies in their education. This also is a middle-of-the-road recommendation because we fear the idea of total province-wide testing. As an educator, I think it is important that we take proactive steps and ensure that student achievement can be guaranteed by the methodologies we use within our schools.

The recommendations, therefore, are that promotion be by grade and that this should be instituted in the light of numerous research findings which highlight the negative effects of grade retention; that the concept of the credit be maintained, especially for students in the senior division; that the definition of a credit in terms of hours may be revised to enable participation in subject areas such as the arts or religious education, business and technological studies, physical and health education, the humanities and the social sciences; that objectives in course guidelines–and this is a very important one for us–be categorized as critical, important and desirable. We could use other terms. Students would obtain credits when critical objectives were mastered. We say this because currently there are numerous objectives outlined in curriculum documents, and I think it is impossible for teachers to comply with all of those objectives.

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If we adopt a philosophy of mastery learning, for example, and we say that all students in a particular course should master, to a minimum level, certain objectives, then I think we would ensure that students gained the knowledge which they need to progress to the next stage of their education.

On the question of semestering, we have also produced some research reports, but we asked our administrators exactly what were their experiences in the area of semestering. They gave us a number of advantages to semestering, and those are outlined on pages 13 and 14.

They also suggested that there are disadvantages to semestering, and when we considered both the advantages and disadvantages, the recommendations that we are making are: that decisions related to models of school organization continue to be made at the board level; that school boards be encouraged to have a variety of school organization models represented within their jurisdictions to accommodate staff and student needs and preferences; that pre- and in-service teacher education programs pay special attention to the teaching of skills and strategies which will help teachers to cope with longer periods and heterogeneous groups of students, among other things; that if changes–this is a very important one for us–to the school year are being contemplated or entertained at this time, there will be sufficient opportunity provided for input from various segments of society.

I notice that many people, in writing these briefs, have made recommendations about the school year. We think that is such an important topic that it warrants a study of its own, so we would ask you most kindly, if you are going to make recommendations on the school year, that we all have an opportunity to do more research on the topic and to make presentations to committees such as this one.

Finally, on OSIS, I must say that education has undergone considerable change over the last 10 years in Ontario. We support many aspects of OSIS. We consider them to be praiseworthy. We have outlined on pages 17 and 18 some of those aspects of OSIS that we consider to be very positive and which do have a lot of validity for schools.

We do think, for example, that the goals of education, although they have been scathingly criticized by Radwanski, are still fairly comprehensive. They should be refined, we think, and linked to performance criteria, operationalized and integrated in the objectives identified in curriculum guidelines. At present, the goals of education are placed at the beginning of each guideline, but teachers need assistance in relating them to curriculum content.

The cross-curricular areas of emphasis are also praiseworthy. We were delighted to see that OSIS brought about the mandatory aspects in terms of guidance program. We think all of that should be retained. The curriculum continuum from grades 7 to 12 OAC, the introduction of Ontario academic courses, issues related to student records, school course calendars, the availability of courses of study for the perusal of parents, the code of student behaviour, co-operative education in terms of increased monitoring, alternative ways of earning credits and so on–I could go on and on about so many good things about OSIS.

There are, however, a few areas of concern and I will try to go through those very quickly. We need to redefine the philosophy and purpose of secondary education. There should be greater congruence among the philosophy, the goals of education and the objectives articulated in curriculum guidelines.

Concerning diploma requirements, there needs to be a review of these. There are many who still think there are too many compulsory credits for students who are studying at the basic or general levels of difficulty. So depending on what happens in terms of levels of difficulty, there has to be a review of the number of credits.

There should be more balanced programming. The speaker before us spoke in terms of family studies; certain areas have suffered because of OSIS. On the other hand, I tend to be equivocating on this topic, because I do not know how much more we can do, given the number of hours we have within the school day.

The study of religious education should be legitimized and the opportunity provided for additional courses in the senior division. That is very important to us as a separate school board.

Promotion should continue by credit.

The issue of levels of difficulty will be reviewed, we know. There are certain areas that need renewed emphasis, studies related to the environment, to Canadian and world history and the role that we play within a global community.

More assistance should be given to teachers in grades 7 and 8 in the implementation of curriculum guidelines and in the adaptation of courses for students with special needs.

Of course, we have made another plea for pre- and in-service teacher education at the elementary level specifically. We think this should be reviewed. Many students enter secondary schools ill-equipped for the rigours of secondary education and at times having lost their enthusiasm for math and science. Consideration should be given to the requirement that grades 7 and 8 teachers have specialist qualifications in subject areas such as math, science, English and French, to name a few. As a long-term objective, we should be aiming at having specialist teachers in the primary and junior divisions as well.

Those are essentially our areas of concern and recommendations. The director has already mentioned the two additional concerns about part-time employment and also the certification for religious education teachers. There is at the moment a dearth of teachers who have additional qualifications in religious education and this is primarily because it is not accepted as a teaching subject in the faculties of education.

Mr. Keyes: I should say with tongue in cheek, with no opposition members on the opposite side, it is great to have all our time to ourselves. Richard will–oh well, he is too late, he did not hear the presentation.

I just wanted to touch on one that has not been mentioned in the 200 or so briefs we have listened to, and it is one of your very last recommendations on page 19, about the long-range future of specialist teachers at the primary and junior levels. I guess I look at this to get some further clarification.

That is where I spent my career and certainly we felt that teachers in contact with young people in elementary schools should try to reflect, in a sense, the parental role to a great extent, as to what you expect from a wholesome home life and parental contact with the child, and you want to carry that forward for a good number of years in schooling.

Your suggestion seems to say that we are going to have specialist teachers right at the primary level. I am not sure if you are trying to do that on a subject basis or what level you are thinking of. I get a little concerned about that.

Dr. Glaze: No, I do not think my suggestion would negate the role that the elementary teacher now plays. I do think in certain areas such as math and sciences–and I have many friends in faculties of education who would bear me out–that particularly in those areas which individuals can drop very early in their career, I could be an elementary teacher with grade 10 or grade 12 mathematics. We are now concerned as a nation about science, for example, in the primary division. It would be an excellent idea to have at least a few teachers in that division who have a substantial background in the subject area and who can exude the enthusiasm for the subject, who are able to generalize in the subject area.

I do know the current structure of elementary schools and the need to have as few teacher contacts as possible, and I think that should be maintained. But even on a basis of having math and the sciences as specialist teachers, I do not think that would in any way disrupt that relationship which we like to have and which I like to see happen in the elementary schools. But I am concerned specifically about math and the sciences because of the limited background of many individuals in these areas.

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Mr. Keyes: I guess you hit on two things there. One comes back to teacher training, which you referred to in the beginning. On my staff, I tried to have a person within my elementary school who had a responsibility for science. Rather than have a specialist as the teacher, one of my teachers would have the specialty in math, another in science, another in English; it was their responsibility to work with the other teachers in the primary division to be sure there was a reasonable challenge in the science and math areas.

Dr. Glaze: That is totally consistent with my recommendations.

Mr. Keyes: The way it is put down there, it might be interpreted another way. We are not on that topic, but teacher training will be another whole study in itself. Surely it has to come there, as it did with the last group which presented. Much of the course material they are talking about for the student should be that of the teachers in the teachers' college, perhaps, and then it would become a part of each teacher in his or her regular work.

I want you to speak a bit further about grade promotion. I thought that at one time you suggested to me that you were going to retain grade promotion but with great awareness to the problems of retention. On page 10, though, you made the statement that promotion by grade not be instituted, because it has been there; it has been there for decades, aeons, centuries. I am not sure. I want you to clarify what you are referring to there.

Dr. Glaze: We are thinking primarily of the secondary level here when we are discussing this question of promotion by grade. I have juxtaposed the promotion by grade with promotion by credits. We are saying that at the secondary level our preference is for promotion by credits.

Mr. Keyes: I think we have that very clearly from everyone who has come before us. It is there now, in our opinion, under OSIS and that is what should be maintained. Therefore, we can basically drop it.

I want to go back to the elementary. I am trying to find out how we are going to get support from boards, trustees, teacher groups and the rest to drop the whole concept of grade promotion at the elementary level. How are we going to take that approach so that we still realize that if you want to put some objectives in terms of David Pratt, critical, etc., how are we going to do away with grade promotion at that level? How would you sell it?

Dr. Glaze: I would not propose that we consider doing away with promotion by grade at the elementary level at this stage.

Mr. Keyes: You want to retain it.

Dr. Glaze: Yes.

Mr. Keyes: You do not give credence to perhaps taking the first step and let it be promotion by divisions.

Dr. Glaze: That is also a possibility and there are many educators–David Pratt, I know–who believe quite strongly that congregating students by age may not necessarily be the best way of doing it. There are many systems which have students in the primary division who are working at specific tasks at their own pace. I know there are other models which are very viable models.

I think, though, it would be a very progressive step for us to do away with promotion by grade at the elementary level and I do not know that we are ready for that at this stage. It would probably be a very good idea to have a few pilot projects in different parts of the province to look at alternative methodologies in this area.

Mr. Bobesich: Could I comment on that?

Mr. Keyes: I would like you to, because everyone avoids it when I ask the question.

Mr. Bobesich: I am struggling with your question. It is obviously a good question and a hard question.

I am getting the impression that the business of grade promotion is practised in different ways across this province. For example, in our own jurisdiction, we of course have grade promotion. Grade retention is a phenomenon that has to be tightly rationalized with the parents and the staff and not only school-based staff, central office staff.

Perhaps before we attempt or pretend we are going to do away with grade promotion, we really should have a look at under what circumstances might one consider retention as opposed to promotion and how this can be played out, because we did, when we were very small

school boards several years ago, give some effort to organizing schools along a nongraded continuum, a continuous progress continuum, when Morie Hillson was in vogue, and that was hard to sustain.

It was possible. We organized it and, structurally, it was possible, but it was hard to sustain, so it went by the boards. Schools that piloted continuous progress are no longer in that mode. They are in a traditional mode.

I guess the point I am making is that I do not think we are ready to abandon grade promotion as we know it but rather to have a look at how we practise it and under what circumstances one might consider retention. I know retention is effected in some jurisdictions, indeed in ours, very sparingly, mind you.

The other point you raised, which is an equally prickly question, is the role of specialists in the elementary school. I can see certainly a growing role of specialists in the grades 7 and 8 intermediate division. With regard to the primary-junior, I understand the issue of advancing science and mathematics. There is debate on that within our own jurisdiction, because we have assumed a strong, child-centred, holistic approach in our primary-junior division.

The role and integration of the specialist is something we need to continue to discuss. Dr. Glaze mentioned math and science. I see a potential role of specialists in those divisions with regard to the arts, where we lay a lot of expectations on to primary-junior teachers with regard to visual arts, music or even physical education, where specialists might play a complementary role–not assume the responsibility but certainly play a complementary and support role. I have seen several American models where that seems to be working quite effectively. That is just a broader perspective that I hold with regard to specialists at the elementary level, and I include the arts in that area.

Mr. Keyes: We did that a bit on our own by trying to have area teams, as we called them, that were specialists in the field of the arts on a rotating basis, out of the classroom for two years and then back again to the classroom, but do not get them thinking they are part of the administration.

Mr. Bobesich: If I may, I have just one final point. That clearly links into my opening comment about the dilemma in which we find ourselves in philosophically promoting or advancing certain positions and living with the reality that we cannot find a heck of a lot of teachers with specialist qualifications whom we could introduce to a school.

When we are interviewing, all things being equal at the elementary level, we tend to look for those people with arts backgrounds so that they can offer that dimension, but we are having a bit of difficulty in finding sufficient teachers so that we can have a balanced staff in each elementary school. It would be great if we had a science and math and art and phys ed specialist in every school. That is an ideal; we have not achieved it yet. That links in with my whole pitch on teacher education.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you very much for the preamble. I thought it was very good. You set it as a background to the type of recommendations you are making because it did put such a big emphasis on co-operation between other ministries but also on the whole teacher training aspect, which may be next year's work of this select committee.

The Vice-Chairman: We will be talking about that soon.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This is supplementary to the grade promotion question. Can you tell us what percentage of your elementary panel takes more than eight years to complete?

Mr. Bobesich: Just give me a moment. We have 26,000 elementary kids, and I think we had six retentions, so six out of 26,000.

Mr. Keyes: That was not in one classroom.

Mr. Bobesich: That is throughout the region.

Mr. Keyes: You survey your 26,000 students. How many of them completed to grade 8 in nine years, using kindergarten to start?

Mr. Bobesich: I cannot respond to that one. Last year, six were retained–that was a specific year–with a total base of 26,000 elementary kids.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One board told us 20 per cent.

Mr. Bobesich: Twenty per cent of the population took more than eight years.

Mr. Keyes: Yes, 20 per cent of them had taken one additional year to complete their elementary schooling.

Mr. Bobesich: We do not have those data.

Mr. Keyes: That was said by them to be, in their opinion, very general across Ontario.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: We are trying to get this figure, because it seems to me there are some very interesting social planning concepts coming

out of it. Have you ever done a socioeconomic analysis of those people who are retained?

Dr. Glaze: No.

Mr. Bobesich: Excuse me?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: A socioeconomic analysis of the the kids who are retained in terms of whether they are kids from lower economic classes who get retained. Have you ever done that kind of analysis?

Mr. Bobesich: No.

Dr. Glaze: No. But only last year it was mentioned in one of our academic council meetings that that is something we should be doing as a board–to see exactly who are the kids who are going to be retained. There is a lot of consciousness about that topic in our board.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just bemoan continually the dearth of information on this from any board throughout the province at the moment.

Mr. Beer: Just very briefly, because not only do we have representatives from the separate school board here but also from the public board, I note that one of the things that must be pleasant for them in coming before this committee at this time is that we have so many capital problems, and I suppose we are invariably almost always talking about those, that actually to have an opportunity to come in and talk about some of the reasons the schools are actually there is a delight and a treat. I want to thank the two boards for their submissions.

My question relates to semestering. It seems to me one of the interesting things for many of the separate school boards is that with the change in the funding, in a sense–well, you have obviously had the secondary schools with the tremendous growth you are now experiencing at that level–you are perhaps able to do some new things, look at some new models and approaches in a way that might be more difficult for some of the public boards which have a more settled secondary population.

You mention in the brief the possibility of a school that might have the senior kids semestered and the grade 9 and 10 kids doing what we would call a regular, year-long program. Are you thinking of possibly trying that out somewhere? Where are you with that? I think that is something that has come up.

Mr. Bobesich: I will ask Avis to speak to the technical application of that because she is the person working most closely with our secondary staff. She is the secondary school superintendent. I was delighted to see the response of our secondary principals relative to looking at alternative modes of structuring a school. There is a very positive mindset on their part, and that is half the battle.

Second, we still have one school that is on a traditional timetable. I, for one, am not anxious that all our secondary schools be semestered. I can see a traditional, I can see a combination of traditional plus semestered and then I see variations of semestering.

Avis, I will let you talk about the technical application.

Dr. Glaze: We have six high schools and one is traditional, as Mr. Bobesich just mentioned. Of the other five, three of those principals are keenly interested in looking at the mixed models, grades 9 and 10 unsemestered and the senior grades semestered. They are also quite interested in many of the individualized programs, and there are a few high schools in Ontario that are actually on individualized timetables. They are not quite satisfied yet that they have the best model for the students in York region and they are openly, actively looking at alternative models.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There are high schools which are totally based on an individualized system?

Dr. Glaze: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you know where they are?

Dr. Glaze: There is one in Hamilton and there are a number in Alberta. I have known of principals who have actually gone out to see these high schools.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Could we try to get some information on these, because we are going to be looking at a variety of models, I think, and it would be interesting to see how that works.

What about the other side of this, which seems to be a question that is being begged at the moment? When you talk about semestering, the questions about the length of the school year and the organization of the school day are begged by that. I am beginning to wonder if we can really deal with the semestering issue fully until we have actually dealt with our concepts about when the school year starts and ends and how it co-ordinates with the universities and that kind of thing.

Dr. Glaze: At the beginning of my brief, I asked the committee kindly not to make any recommendations on the school year until we have had time to study that and to present briefs, because I think they are inextricably intertwined.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I apologize for not having looked at that. I will have to read it now or have it read to me.

The Vice-Chairman: I know, Mr. Johnston, you will be particularly interested in what they are doing in California.

Mr. Bobesich: If I could just comment on that point, the school year is a bit of a minor irritant for some of us in our system. When I referenced this teacher education review, one of the recommendations they deal with is advancing the idea of lengthening the teacher practice period and having those students go on into May and June when the rest of us are supposed to be working anyway, so that seems to make sense to me.

The current legislation on the school year of 185 days, less exam time, less time for all the other co-curricular activities and emerging innovative titles I am hearing for people not being in school per se, is really causing me to wonder what the length of the school year is.

If we are going to be looking at changes in secondary education, then I think, yes, the school year ought to be examined, not with the notion of radically changing it and making everybody go to school in the summer–I still value the summer period–but having a good, hard look at the whole question of the school year and how much discretionary time an individual board or, more precisely, an individual school principal has for downtime within that 185 days.

I think that is only sensible if we are saying we have to drive forward some more critical criteria or critical objectives that have to be met. It is one of those if-then things. If we are going to advance this, then we have to enable structures or legislate structures that would facilitate that. That is a long way of sharing a small irritant with you about the current school year.

The Vice-Chairman: I know. That is one topic that members of the committee have indicated a wish to investigate further, so perhaps that will help them.

Dr. Glaze: As just a final comment on this particular topic, the most recent issue of Educational Leadership addresses the whole question of how schools are organized. They are very critical of the fact that schools are organized around the calendar and its adjuncts–the clock and the schedule. Instead, they are suggesting that there are other ways of organizing education to ensure greater educational outcomes. It is just an excellent issue of Educational Leadership that deals with the whole question of school organization.

The Vice-Chairman: I want to thank the representatives of the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board for their presentation this morning and for providing advice to the committee. It has been a pleasure to listen to you.

We will move on to the Durham Board of Education.

Mr. Keyes: I can also guarantee that we will not do that recommendation on the school year other than to recommend that we should sit for another year to consider it and hear the representations again. The year after that there will be teacher education.

The Vice-Chairman: It might be an appropriate subject for study in July and August.

Interjections

The Vice-Chairman: I wonder if we can return to some semblance of order. Mr. Ballinger, did you want to introduce the next deputants?

Mr. Ballinger: When you have a riding named Durham-York, and they both happen to appear at the same time, it is important to get my visiting in first.

The Vice-Chairman: We are pleased to have the Durham board with us this morning. Mrs. Lawson, I invite you to proceed with your presentation. Perhaps you could begin by introducing your associates, presenting your brief and, hopefully, leaving us some time for questions. We have set aside half an hour for the presentation.

DURHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Lawson: On my left is our director of education, Bruce Mather, and on my right is Louise Farr, a trustee from Pickering.

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Good morning, members of the select committee on education. The Durham Board of Education would like to thank you for this opportunity to present to the select committee on education. The board commends the government for undertaking this extensive review of the educational system.

Education must provide a meaningful service to society and it is imperative that reviews, evaluations and, where deemed necessary, renewal of the existing structures be undertaken if it is to survive as a public institution. Strategic planning processes are not new to education. Reports such as Issues and Directions; Secondary Education and Renewal Project; and Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior are all products

of the 1980s. Perhaps these processes will become even more commonplace as we move towards the 21st century and the maturing of our information society.

In the next few minutes, I would like to make a few comments on the Durham board's submission to this committee. The focus of our presentation is on the partnership between the provincial government and the local school systems. On the first page of Issues and Directions, published in 1980, is the following statement:

"The values of a society are both reflected and shaped by its educational system. In its reflecting role, education must honour the values and ideals considered important by society. In its shaping role, education must provide leadership and vision. An education system that fulfils these two roles must be based on an understanding of what society is and what it may become."

Included in the package is a discussion paper on the future of education in Durham entitled Towards 2000: Twelve Years and Counting. This paper formed the basis for discussion and analysis at principals' and staff meetings and it is here to indicate to you the kinds of educational leadership and vision that are happening at the local level.

Of fundamental importance to our system are the goals of education as set out by the ministry in Issues and Directions. To make these goals more concrete and practical, the board has developed board educational objectives based on these goals. A copy of these objectives is included with the package. In this report, we have emphasized some of the many positive aspects that have been implemented in the Durham school system to ensure a consistent follow-through of ministry and board goals and objectives.

We are proud of our work and the partnerships that have developed in Durham with the Ministry of Education, Canada Employment Centre, youth employment services, and local businesses and industries to enhance the opportunities for students. Durham conscientiously attempts to implement provincial government initiatives. However, it must be noted that the number and variety may divert us from other local priorities. Secondly, some have raised questions about the boundaries between and the mandate of the educational system and the other ministries.

The comments on streaming are taken directly from the board's submission to the minister on the Radwanski report. I would like to add that the parents' committee and a group of students from Harwood Collegiate and Vocational School, one of our vocational schools, also responded to the Radwanski report. This supports our statement about the remarkably high level of support that the vocational schools in Durham receive from students and parents. The Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) has visited this school, and in late November we look forward to welcoming Dr. Shapiro. Of course, we would welcome any members of this committee to come out and visit us at Harwood and/or Vanier.

The comments on semestering focus on the theme of partnership and the board's ability to establish several modes of delivering educational programs to respond to a diversity of community needs. The board would see any move to impose a rigid structure as a retrograde step and would oppose any such move to implement this rigid structure on the local school systems.

On OSIS, the board would urge that you give OSIS a fair trial and that school systems be given the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of this new document for our students. Further, we would urge that no fundamental restructuring of the school system be undertaken without major research studies to support such a change.

In closing, on behalf of the Durham Board of Education, I extend to each of you an invitation to visit the Durham school system, to spend some time in our classrooms and to talk with our students, teachers, administrators and trustees. Together, we must work to achieve the fundamental goals as they are related to the equal life chances and full development of each student.

You have a copy of our brief, and I am prepared to accept questions on this.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you. Let me open it to questions from members. Perhaps in the absence of having any indication yet from members who wish to ask questions, may I ask you a couple about streaming myself in response to what you said in the brief. Do your statements apply to all secondary grades? Many groups that have appeared before us have suggested that we destream in grades 9 and 10, but not in the senior grades. Your brief suggests that in the absence of some other conditions being met, we should not alter the streaming situation in secondary schools. Is that correct?

Mrs. Lawson: Yes, it is correct.

Mr. Mather: If I could respond to that, I am getting the flavour from a lot I am hearing and reading that this is beginning to be seen as a reasonable compromise, but I think the reservations we had about streaming in general would still be in effect. We agree that streaming does not appear to be consistent with some of our

democratic principles, but there were some very practical realities that led us to do that. Much as I would like to believe we can move to non-streaming tomorrow, there are some very practical limitations on that.

One of them, as we said in there, is that if you put children of every ability level and achievement level in the same class, you are putting a very considerable challenge on the teacher and the kind of training he or she has had to deal with that sort of student. In principle, that would be a great idea, but to just do it holus-bolus by government mandate without realizing that there are some other implications, including class size and the type of in-service the teachers receive, could have a detrimental effect.

The Vice-Chairman: If we were to look at grade 9, for example, how much different would that be from what we already do in the elementary schools, in terms of putting students of wide-ranging abilities in the same classroom?

Mr. Mather: I think that in most of our elementary schools, elementary teachers at the intermediate division are pretty skilled in using homogeneous grouping where necessary. The beauty of the elementary class is that where it is possible to group children heterogeneously, you can. In some specific skills areas, for example, such as math and language arts, it is possible for a teacher in a single classroom to group heterogeneously.

The same practice could take place at the secondary school level, but in my experience, grouping has not been a standard technique that secondary school teachers have used. They have tended more to teach the whole class, and that has been possible because everyone in the class was at least at the same general, advanced or basic level. Secondary school teachers could do it, but I think there are some significant in-service implications for them. They would have to learn how to use grouping techniques.

Mr. Beer: I wonder if you could elaborate on the question of semestering. You note that in your 18 secondary schools you have fully semestered, partially semestered and non-semestered. Could you describe what you have in place in your partially semestered schools?

Mr. Mather: I would be happy to. Unfortunately, I must also confess that the one school that was partially semestered was basically nonsemestered in grades 9 and 10 and semestered in the senior division. They found it did not work. I am not particularly aware of all the reasons they found it did not work, but they since have gone to totally semestered. However, that does not mean schools are not continuing to look at options.

A little more than half our schools are currently semestered, with two looking very seriously at moving in that direction. However, as the chairman said, in our system we believe those decisions really should be made at the community level because we insist that before a school goes to semestering we look at the implications for neighbouring schools. We like to have at least one semestered and one nonsemestered school in every community. We make sure that when a principal is looking at semestering, there are intensive discussions with the staff, students, parents and local trustees, so that when he finally makes the decision, he feels there is a lot of support for it.

I am hoping that one of the two schools that has recently requested to look at semestering is also going to look at mixed semestering, but I must confess that the one that tried it, it did not work.

Mr. Beer: Over how long a period was that? Do you recall? Was it a year or two years?

Mr. Mather: Three years.

Mr. Beer: Grades 9 and 10 were not semestered and the senior grades were.

Mr. Mather: That is right.

Mr. Beer: That is one thing we were talking about with the previous group. I suppose the principal, in particular, came to the determination that it did not work. Is it possible to get a little more information, just to identify some of the problems they had? I am not saying that therefore means it cannot be done, but it would be of interest to know at least what the problems were.

Mr. Mather: I would be very happy to provide that information.

The Vice-Chairman: It seems to me that one of the factors in that kind of trial would be the size of the school and the total number of teachers available within it. How large was the school in which the experiment was attempted?

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Mr. Mather: I think the current enrolment is around 1,100.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Beer, I am sorry to have interrupted your question.

Mr. Beer: That is fine.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If I might, I will come to the OSIS question. On the one hand we get, not from you but from others, a whole series of concerns about OSIS, individual problems that are being identified, and yet the overall message

is, do not touch it. Can I raise some of the concerns with you and see why you do not think they are significant enough to touch OSIS at this point, but you would rather watch it go further.

People on the arts side of teaching say it has been a major deterrent to the development of music and art. Technical studies teachers say that OSIS is a major factor in the decline in technical programs being available. Family studies people, who came before us today, are basically saying that because there is no mandatory family studies requirement under OSIS, their involvement is dropping off at a time when we really critically need people to be more aware of how to do parenting and that kind of thing.

What are some of the other major factors that have been raised? Are these not serious enough individual concerns so that some tinkering can be done with OSIS, without throwing out the whole notion of that kind of a credit system?

I guess that is my question, which maybe we should have been asking more of the groups who have said, "Do not mess with it too much." Some groups have been very alarmist about their individual niches within the school system. Yet the overall message is, do not touch it.

Mrs. Farr: Perhaps all three of us can answer. As you know, in each board, there is not one view or one vision of any of this, just as there will not be one vision or view around this table.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What? No consensus here? That is hard to believe.

Mrs. Farr: The areas you highlighted are definitely of concern, and I think when we are looking at the dropout issue, that also has some ramifications there.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes.

Mrs. Farr: I think rather than throwing the baby out with the bath water, everyone is saying, you should at least allow this to be implemented fully and allow it to be evaluated before you say it is not working. If it is clearly already not working for one group, then perhaps we have to compromise, and as you say, take a new direction to address that group.

We have to look at suggesting that when the Radwanski report referred to a dropout as a person who did not receive his grade 12 diploma, perhaps we have to review that whole area. If that has a distinct connection to OSIS, then we say that perhaps we should develop a new diploma for another student who is looking at the workforce following his grade 12 diploma, and not looking at post-secondary education. I think we can address it from that point.

If the technical area then has to be addressed, and we can afford or apply a diploma to go along with that area, then we address that, but I think OSIS is definitely working for a very large group of the students.

The group you had before you yesterday is saying that already the literacy level is rising because OSIS has addressed that. More of an emphasis has been placed in that area. I think it is working in some areas. It is really too early to say that it is not the answer, that it is not the panacea for everyone. It is for one group and perhaps it can be modified. I would say do not radically put it aside and say: "Now what, folks? Where are going from here?"

Mr. R. F. Johnston: To add to your response, may I throw into the mix of this the notion that if we do make any changes in the structuring of grades 9 and 10 in terms of moving more to the heterogeneous class base and some kind of limitation on streaming in that area, that also has implications for OSIS. Some of those people who have been suggesting we do that have not been suggesting changes in OSIS, which is also a little difficult to see.

Mr. Mather: My comment would have been that I think it is a gross oversimplification to give ministry or government documents too much credit or too much blame. It is simplistic to say OSIS is to blame for all of the following things. On technical education, for example, I could name a school in our system where technical education enrolments are going up, and one of the reasons is that they are marketing technical education like mad. They are repackaging courses.

One of the reasons technical education is going down the tube in a lot of areas is that teachers are using 20- and 25-year-old guidelines. That is preposterous when you look at the technological change in our society. In my view, a sensitive reading of OSIS allowed innovative principals and teachers to continue to do whatever they felt was necessary to meet the needs of kids. There was some tightening of the structure.

You will all remember that when OSIS first came out it was not embraced by secondary school teachers. However, being dutiful civil servants, they began to implement it and three or four years down the tube, just as they are beginning to adapt guidelines, they pick up the paper and are told OSIS is rotten and to turn around and go the other way. That approach to change, I think, in the long run is the reason why teachers become very resistant to change. They say, "I am just going to sit in the middle, because

if I stay here long enough I know I am going to be right." That is not going to get us the kind of school system I think we need.

By all means tinker if we have to.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But in what areas, if we are going to do that? What I am interested in knowing is, accepting the premise that this kind of credit system and some of the other principles involved in OSIS are fine, what areas should we be looking at, do you think, in terms of limited view? You are saying that perhaps the front-end loading problem of OSIS is not the major problem of high-tech ed. What about the notion of 30 credits being too much for the general-level student? What about the effect on some of those other things I raised? Are any of those the areas you would suggest we look at, or would you rather say to wait on it all until we have had a better chance to maybe set up a process for analysing OSIS in a systematic fashion, which we do not seem to have at this stage either?

MR. Mather: I think that when our board responded to the Renewal of Secondary Education–remember ROSE followed the secondary education review project and at that time there was the suggestion of the increased number of credits for basic- and general-level kids–I remember our board responding, saying it was our belief that increasing the number of credits was going to exacerbate the dropout problem for basic- and general-level students. I think quite frankly that is one of the major reasons we have seen the recent very significant increase. That is an area I think you should re-examine.

But in case this is the last chance I get, this question would lead me to say that after 35 years in this profession, during all of which I have tried to be a change agent, I guess the one thing that has always struck me is that we love to tinker with the organization of education. Most of the changes we see every 5 to 10 years tend to be organizational. I am absolutely convinced that does not change the system. The quality of the system occurs in the classroom with the quality of the teacher. The secret to whatever problems we are trying to grapple with, I believe, is in the quality of the teacher in the classroom, the quality of pre-service training, and more important, the quality of in-service training. If I had to put my dollars in making the system better, that is where I would put them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is also a message we have been hearing a fair amount.

Mr. Keyes: Probably my question follows right along with that because I was going to go to the practical side for a moment and say that if we have to be somewhat cost-efficient in what we are doing in changes, what do you see as some of the priority areas?

Probably that is your answer just now on the teaching training. You have said that if we are going to do away with streaming, we have two very major expenditure forces there, trying to train teachers to cope at the secondary level with a system that is fairly inherent in the elementary panel, and also to reduce class sizes.

Probably it is very true that if you can reduce the class size you can do a much better job with those who come before you, but with the larger numbers we have in high school, it has not frankly cost a great deal more money to have a streaming system. In fact that has been the answer, really, streaming, if you are going to have the largest classes.

Responding to your last comment about in-service, is that one of the major areas where you feel increased dollars should be placed in the system today, and they should get away from the bricks and mortar that have to come about because of enrolment? What are some of the other things? Then I want to ask you another question on grade promotion similar to the last group.

Mr. Mather: If the question was a follow-up to my comment, I would say yes. We have particular cost problems in Durham, because of our growth, as I am sure you are well aware, but getting back to in-service, I am not sure that it is just–

Mr. Ballinger: The members are aware anyway.

Mr. Mather: That is good. I am not sure that we necessarily need to spend a lot more money on in-service. In our paper the chairman refers to the learning consortium of which we are now a major party, with the faculty. One of the most innovative and exciting techniques we are exploring is the whole concept of peer coaching.

It is our belief that peer coaching is probably the most promising in-service strategy to come along in 20 years. Bruce Joyce told us 20 years ago that it was the answer. We are moving in that direction. That is potentially quite an inexpensive form of in-service because it is simply two teachers working together whenever they have the opportunity, at lunch hour, before school, after school, on professional activity days and, occasionally, when one of them would be released. That is a very promising one, but it does not necessarily have a big price tag on it, I do not believe.

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Mrs. Farr: I think for myself, as a trustee, I tend to leave the academic side in the very capable hands of our director and those who support him. I tend to lean more towards the social side. After sitting for a year and a half, looking at the dropout rate in our board and other boards and at research materials that have been presented, we call our committee TRY. I think that basically is the substance of it, for "transition and retention of youth," but a lot of the remedies that I see being put forth are short-term remedies. They are Band-Aid approaches, all at the secondary, but they are valid, they are laudable and they are much needed.

I know the Durham board has taken advantage of seed moneys provided by the provincial government, and we have put very successful alternative and transition programs in place. I certainly would support that we continue with those, and I would look for further seed money or continuance of the support dollars for those programs.

We are not able to identify a lot of the needs at the elementary level, and I think we can all try to do a better job of identifying our high-risk students at the kindergarten, grades 1 and grade 2 levels. There are many indicators there from the research, and certainly from what we have been looking at within our own system, where we have to have a better marrying with other ministries. We have taken on the day care issue with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education, working together to address that.

I think we go out and we look at the society and the changes that are there. We are having a very complex student come before us today. I think we are remiss, and I think the Radwanski report was very remiss, in not addressing that whole issue. It was addressed, but in a very minute way. We are so anxious to put the blame somewhere, and it is very easy to put it on the educational system and those who provide it, when I think we have to have better parenting education–you referred to that–by family studies. But I think we have to go out into the community to those who are already parents. They are young people. We have preteen programs. We have teaching for pregnant teens. Then we look into subsidized day care to provide a place for those children while those new mothers are coming back to finish their secondary education.

We can identify a lot of that by looking at the absentee rates at kindergarten and grade 1. We can look at the nutritional level of the children coming into the system. We can look at the single parent and how that phenomenon is increasing daily. I think we can do more to address all those issues to better prepare that young person. The ideal situation is that we are a partnership in the education with the parents and the school, but we also know that is not possible in many instances.

When it is impossible, what other services can we bring in to support? Is it an increase of guidance time at the elementary level to support those children and the families? Is it increased social workers in the school system? We are now looking at providing one at each of our secondary schools, but at the secondary level, you are having to undo an awful lot of problems that have been there for eight or nine years.

I sit on the supervised alternative learning for excused pupil committee, and yesterday I addressed five 15-year-old students looking for alternative programs. By looking through their records, there were many indicators at kindergarten and grade 1 and perhaps even preschool. If we can get in touch with the community by support from many ministries, if we all get together in this and we do not spend time pointing the finger, I think we can do a better job.

Mr. Keyes: Your social worker should be in the elementary level rather than the secondary perhaps.

Mrs. Farr: I think you need them at both.

Mr. Keyes: Yes.

Mrs. Farr: You are going to have that element there. It is not going to go away, but you can do a better job and reduce the numbers of high-risk kids that you have to address at the secondary level, and you will not be having to find alternative and quick-fix programs to address 30 per cent of your education population. I assume and I firmly believe that those numbers would diminish. I do not think they will ever go away. I do not think the education system or anyone will ever be able to rid us of all those problems, but I think we can do a better job.

Mr. Keyes: I will have to forgo my question on grade promotion. Maybe it will creep into another question.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I ask about your social work program within your board and how you deal with that kind of human resource?

Mrs. Farr: Yes. What we have presently are social workers coming into certain schools for either a half-day or whole-day program. They are brought in through the guidance people. It has been a referral from teacher to guidance, and then the guidance people have dealt with it as far as

they feel they are capable. But we are talking about very high-risk students–suicidal, students who are going to leave. They are environmental problems.

Mrs. O'Neill: This is at the secondary level. Do you have any at the elementary level?

Mrs. Farr: Not coming into the schools that I am aware of. We are beginning to have a better referral system, but I think we have to heighten that. The teachers right now go to the public health nurse, then she may link them to a service. It is not a true buying-in of it, and I think we have to have better co-ordination so it is not just simply that you refer them somewhere and that is taken care of, there now, their home is all going to be settled and everyone is going to fall into place. Of course, that is too simplistic; so we will have to follow that up.

Mrs. O'Neill: As Mr. Mather likely knows, the Ottawa board has done quite a bit in this area with mental health of very young students. In 10 centres it has been very well received by the community and, I think, very effective, so that is one place you can go for an example. We need to come up to Ottawa again.

Mrs. Farr: I know some boards, like the Scarborough board, for instance–and we had the chief social worker there come in and speak to our group–they have them on site. But, quite frankly, I get a little upset, as a trustee, when once again we spend education dollars to cure everything. I know it is all ratepayers' money, it is all tax dollars, but I would like to see different ministries getting involved because, I think, they are. I think we should–

Mrs. O'Neill: You might save some money on special education, look at it that way.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Where the money comes from, I think, is secondary to the issue of what the role of the school should be, in terms of the changing society, and what its function should be. More and more I am beginning to think it, maybe, should be the centre for co-ordinating services to kids. If you think about it in those terms, and if money can be channelled from various ministries for those purposes, then maybe that is the place to have the co-ordination take place, since that is the place where kids are seen.

Mrs. Farr: I certainly think it is.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There are two factual things I want to ask you about. On grade promotion, the Peel board told us that 20 per cent of their kids take more than the eight years from grades 1 to 8, or nine years from kindergarten to grade 8 to complete. I wonder if you have a statistic on that for your board, in terms of whether there are many children who take nine years to complete grades 1 through 8.

Mrs. Lawson: We have not got a statistic of which I am aware. We were talking about that just briefly when the question came up with the last group. We thought that figure awfully high because 20 per cent is 5 in 100. We think it is closer to 1 in 20. We really do not have any data on it though.

Mr. Mather: I wish we did. My first reaction was that I thought that figure was high and I would have been thinking, perhaps, 5 to 10 per cent, something like that; but we do not have definitive figure and probably should have.

Mr. Farr: What I would want boards or yourselves to look at further on that issue is whether there is a definite correlation between those who repeated and those who became their dropout statistics, because we are getting indication that there is.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: North York studies are showing this definitively, and that is why I asked the question of Peel. When that figure came back my jaw dropped and I heard a couple of others hit the table over on the other side. So far we have not found anybody else who keeps that information, unfortunately, but it seems me something that we should be looking at, as well, as a socioeconomic kind of analysis of it, as I said to the earlier group.

You raised something which struck me as something which we have not asked much about, in terms of early indicators, and that is absentee rates for kindergarten and grade 1 kids. That would be a fascinating thing to be able to look at and, again, to have some socioeconomic kind of analysis of that. What kind of information do you keep in your board around those kinds of rates? When you say you had that committee you raised those kinds of issues. Do you have a statistical base now that you have been developing to look at that all?

Mrs. Farr: As far as I am aware, no, we do not; but I think it is going to be one of the recommendations coming from the committee, and that we utilize our attendance councillors more readily, quicker on the mark, that the information is coming out and that you do look at it and that you do address it. If sometimes it ends up that education is just not a priority for that parent–Johnny does not feel well this morning–well, then it is really quite fine, he should stay home. Perhaps the parents are not in the home

and they are not aware of the situation, and so on, and so forth. But certainly, again, when we look at the high-risk kids, there is a high level of absenteeism.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It just seems to me that, if it is an indicator, I have thought about it in terms of a trigger that should be affecting everybody and that says, "Look at this," rather than saying it is just an academic outcome that you are looking at. If you look at that absenteeism early plus a couple of other factors instead, you would probably go a long way to identifying them. It would be really good to have a system for doing that across the province.

Mr. Mather: Our transition and retention of youth committee is very representative of the community, and I think it is very frustrated with the lack of data we are able to give it. We do not have a research department, and I know that it has been making a number of recommendations about our having better data. I am sure the same thing would be true provincially.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I presume we cannot get this information from the ministry, because if boards are not collecting it then the ministry will not have it. I see the minister shaking his head, so I will not even ask for it. I hold myself back and presume we cannot have it.

The Vice-Chairman: That is a first, I think, is it not, Mr. Johnston?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think it is a first.

The Vice-Chairman: –that we have thought of something, and you have no answers. Are there any further questions? If not, I want to thank the Durham board for its presentation this morning and this afternoon. With that, we will recess until 2 p.m.

The committee recessed at 12:12 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:15 p.m. in committee room 1.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to open the session of the select committee on education. I apologize for the delay. A number of the members are at a press conference that is being hosted by the Ontario Public Education Network, which I gather is going on at this moment. We hope they will be joining us in progress.

I would like to welcome the Board of Education for the City of York. We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation. It starts now and not when it was supposed to, at two o'clock, so you do have 30 minutes left in your presentation time. We are hoping an ample amount of that will be left for members' questions.

Please begin whenever you wish by identifying yourself for Hansard.

BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE CITY OF YORK

Mrs. Hainer: Thank you very much, Mrs. Poole. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the committee for allowing us to be here today. It is very important to us. We feel it is important that we let you know exactly how we feel in the city of York.

Before I begin, I would like to introduce to you the people who are here with me. I am Pat Hainer, chairman of the school board in the city of York; to my right is Karen Hen, vice-chairman of the school board; to my left is John Phillips, director of education, and on my far right is Daryl Hodgins, superintendent of programs.

The Board of Education for the City of York offers educational programs to 32,000 learners from infants to seniors. The traditional day school students, ranging in age from four years to 18 years, comprise half of that number. Adults, seniors, parents and preschoolers and re-entering youths make up the other half.

With a relatively high percentage of still affordable housing, the city of York attracts single parents, seniors, families in transition, as well as new immigrants. In 1987-88, 15 per cent of the total enrolment of day school students, elementary and secondary, were new immigrants entering a Canadian school for the first time. The rate of illiteracy among the population is quite high. With high transiency and low facility in English, York's population has educational needs beyond the traditional junior kindergarten to high school graduation programs.

The board has responded to these needs by developing a diverse range of programs. Accepting the ongoing evolution of educational needs, the board adopted a philosophy of "Learning for Life!" and a policy of student-centred learning. As an instructional pattern, student-centred learning addresses the reality of students with varying backgrounds, ages and the differences in both ability and levels of achievement.

To prepare for the next decade, the Education 2000 grass-roots planning project was begun three years ago to develop a strategic plan for the future delivery of educational services. As the Education 2000 project proceeds, a clear message can be heard. In the year 2000, the city of York school system must be flexible, accessible and versatile. It must do this to serve an increasingly varied range of clientele. Copies of the Education 2000 report were submitted to the committee with our brief.

As changes in secondary education in Ontario are discussed, this board continues to focus on building a system to serve the people of our city. Any mandated changes that create rigidity in direction or stress universal outcomes will not be welcomed in the city of York. The board's views on dropouts were made known through its contribution to the brief from the public boards in Metro. As well, the board has filed its response to the Radwanski report with the select committee.

In these sessions, your committee is focusing on three distinct aspects of secondary education, namely, semestering, grade retention and streaming. Each of these three has a significant impact on a school system's ability to be flexible, accessible and versatile.

Mrs. Hen: As the members have our submission before them, I would like to depart from the text and briefly highlight a few of the main points relevant to the three topics.

The semester system: We know there are some criticisms, but it is popular with students and staff. The semester system suits very able, able and less able students. It suits dropins, co-operative education, fast-tracking, the year-round school and student-centred learning.

Grade promotion-retention: Grade versus subject promotion or retention is basically a concern at elementary level. We are actively attempting to address that concern at the elementary level through special projects and our board's policy

on student-centred learning. Once students move into secondary school, OSIS imposes more rigidity and rates of progress vary even more than they do in the elementary grades. A solution may be the establishment of a grades 9 and 10 package of general studies that results in a certificate. At the senior secondary school level, subject promotion needs to be continued.

Streaming: There is a societal expectation to prepare adolescents for their future. To fulfil this expectation, several questions need to be answered. Does this preparation require a graduation diploma? Is it expected that every student will graduate? The City of York Board of Education accepts that some kind of streaming is necessary but suggests that the question of when it is appropriate needs to be answered. Delaying streaming until senior secondary school would allow heterogeneous groups of students to remain together longer. Concurrent trends away from occupational and vocational schools and, at the same time, towards special schools for the arts, science and sports are rather contradictory.

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Mrs. Hainer: The board is pleased to offer the following recommendations for the consideration of the select committee:

Semestering should continue to be the dominant form of secondary school organization. Semestering serves both very able and less able students, enhances co-operative education programming and serves both fast-tracking and re-entering students. Further investigation should be made of year-round education to make scheduling opportunities more flexible. However, some nonsemestered schools and programs should be retained for those who prefer them.

Clarification is needed as to the expectations regarding the achievement of the Ontario secondary school diploma. Is every student expected to attain a diploma?

Clear, realistic outcome requirements should be specified for senior secondary students. Subject promotion identifies specific areas of achievement that are needed for post-secondary education and employment.

Senior secondary programs should be streamed. Students have varied abilities, interests and future goals, and these diverse needs can only be met through some form of streaming.

A general package of studies should be developed for grades 9 and 10. Such a general package would emphasize and reinforce literacy and numeracy and would contain blocks for optional subjects as well. This would delay streaming and enable a heterogeneous body of students to learn together.

A certificate or letter of achievement should be provided at the end of grade 10. Such a certificate would be attainable for most students and be really recognizable by the general public as a literacy licence distinct from the Ontario secondary school diploma.

Existing special programs should be maintained. Special arrangements, historically and legislatively established, must continue to be provided for exceptional students.

Special occupational/vocational schools should be maintained. The instructional and interpersonal needs of these students are better served in smaller, self-contained settings.

We would be happy to answer any questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. We really appreciate the fact that you have précised your brief in order to allow time for questions. We will start off with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Madam Chairman, I apologize for our being delayed. With the open press conference on, I, as critic, did not want to be seen as slighting the forces for public education out there. I wanted to make sure I could be there as well.

Can I ask you a question which I have been asking every board recently that has come before us since the Peel board told us that one fifth of its students take more than eight years to complete grades 1 through 8? What are the stats for York?

Mr. Hodgins: About a third of the students in York are a year behind the normal age gradient when they reach grade 8, bearing in mind that we have a large immigrant community and many of the students have not had the regular educational programs. On an age basis, they are a year behind. Whether that means they have come through the system is another issue, and I do not have statistics on those who start in kindergarten and work through.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It would be a very interesting thing to see the split clearly in terms of those who have gone right through the system and those who came in as immigrants in the middle of it. Have you ever done any tracking of these students by socioeconomic group?

Mrs. Hainer: No.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Nobody else has, so do not be surprised. We hear, and most studies show, that the lowest socioeconomic group seems to do least well in the education system. Unfortunately, we do not seem to have developed any database within the province to be able

to see exactly what the situation is. It is a little frustrating from our perspective, now that we are trying to look at these issues.

Mr. Phillips: When you look at the city of York, we are a highly mobile population. Last year, we had 1,848 students come into the city of York for the first time, who came into Canada and landed in the city of York. That is 1,848 out of 15,000 students, which is the best part of 20 per cent.

We did try tracking. We did get a company to track it. It cost us a fortune, literally, to track these people, because of the 1,848, we just found out there are barely 600 of them still in the city this year. That is, of the people who came in last year, as of the September 30 report, there are 649, I think the number was, which really shows the transiency.

For instance, we have one school in which 22 per cent of the population that came in at junior kindergarten are still there by the time we get to grade 6. The highest retention rate we have is 42 per cent. So we range from 22 per cent to 42 per cent.

With a tremendously mobile population, whereas we would love to have longitudinal studies on these people, it is just impossible, within the resources, to be able to have that sort of program. It is important we do, but we did try it and we found we just could not keep track of them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Fascinating.

Can I ask you a question about your notion of what the core subjects should be for your grades 9 and 10 if you move to the kind of model you are talking about? You mentioned a few of the basics. At the moment in grades 9 and 10, how many credits would they accumulate at this stage under OSIS, 16?

Mr. Hodgins: Yes, 16.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Would you be presuming that there would be 16 credits under this new revised business? The reason I ask is that many groups are suggesting a change to 9 and 10. We have not been pursuing it very hard. Mr. Keyes and I perhaps have been trying to get a little better handle on what people's views then are of what that reorganization would look like in this case, in particular towards curriculum. I wonder if you can give us an idea how you see this. At around 16 credits, what do you see being–

Mr. Hodgins: One of the things we were looking at was to try to get away from the rigidity of the credit program at that stage, so that we would maintain the basic subjects, I think–the literacy, the numeracy, the language and science, phys ed; the normal package that would constitute those two years–but we might be able to expand the language component and adjust the time commitment to some of the others so that the technical and the arts subjects, for example, are not squeezed out.

One of the main concerns is that enrolment is falling off in those areas because of the mandated requirements of OSIS. If we change the time constraints without the rigidity of the credit system, then we could in fact have more optionality available in those areas.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So that I understand, the time constraint you are talking about is the 110 hours for a credit?

Mr. Hodgins: The credit hours of 110 hours of instruction. I think that is where we see there could be some flexibility built into the package.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am pleased to hear you say you did not want to see tech squeezed out of it, because we had a wonderfully articulate presentation by two tech teachers about why in fact tech should be available to most students in terms of just how you learn.

What about family studies? It seems to me if we start to look at moving to grade 10 as the basic education–you raised the question rhetorically, should everybody get to 12?–if we are now saying that 10 is where we want those basic skills to be provided to people for living and at work, what about the role of family studies in that as a basic in terms of things like parenting and progress around violence and that kind of thing? Where do you see it? Do you see that fitting in that core and, if so, how?

Mr. Phillips: I think, to step back a little into the 9 and 10 levels, there are about 16 mandatory credits in the Ontario secondary school graduation diploma at the moment. What we find is that many students wish to cram the 16 into the first two years. So I think if you give the students things like family studies, life skills, what I would call the current economic studies–you know, how many students do not know what the banking system is all about, credit and so on, many of those life skills?–I think if you make some of those that I would call general-application programs not mandatory but at least more easily available in grades 9 and 10, there would be a better package in 9 and 10.

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In other words, if you move some of the mandatory subjects into your senior division, mandatory subjects that are perhaps more aca-

demically oriented, and move some of your general life skills kinds of programs, the family studies, into the intermediate division–that is, grades 9 and 10–I think that would be better for many students in the general and basic levels.

The advanced people, who are identified by the time they get to grade 3 or 4, should still have the option to go ahead with the academic studies if they want. But for the body, there should be a less prescriptive bundle, if you wish, or package in grades 9 and 10. That would help to ease some of the problems we have. With everybody taking all academic subjects immediately, many of the students, we know in our experience, do not fare very well with the academic studies at that level.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Your reorganization, I presume, would also get away from the difficulty of the general student having to achieve 30 credits to graduate at this point. One thing that would be different in grades 9 and 10 is that, in fact, there would be more flexibility than there is now under OSIS for that kind of student to leave with some kind of diploma after grade 12.

Mr. Keyes: Maybe we could just follow along there. If we are going to use it as general to grades 9 and 10, then I want to look at it to give the student who wishes to change direction quite dramatically at the end of grade 10 a feeling of accomplishment. While on page 13 you talk about providing a certificate or letter of achievement, I wonder if we cannot just enhance that slightly.

A person might decide he wants to go on into a vocational type of additional training, trades training, something of that nature, or he may want to stay in the general school system and take what has been suggested as maybe two streams, the general and advanced streams for grades 11 and 12 and on to university.

I think if we do that, we should try to enhance the image a person has of himself if he decides to change direction at the end of grade 10, tying it in with the fact that we are still using 16 as a basic compulsory school age, which is the approximate age of the majority of those, except that at your board it would obviously be almost a year beyond that.

What comment would you have there? You seem to downplay slightly, in that sixth recommendation, the level of the type of certificate. I think if we make it meaningful, get away from compulsory, allow some flexibility there for life skill preparation, family studies and others, it could be very worth while.

Mr. Phillips: I would like to probably throw that back as a question. If the level of instruction is suited to the ability of that student, does the committee feel that every student, or at least, say, 90-odd per cent of the students, can achieve an Ontario secondary school general diploma? That is a rhetorical question. It would be nice to have it. I do not think, however, it is realistic to expect that. Therefore, there should be some recognition of achievement for students. It does not matter how interesting or relevant we make the secondary schools; there are students who, because of the chemistry of youth, will wish to leave for independence, and I think there should be some milestone other than the OSSGD.

Mr. Keyes: You are answering my question in a positive vein. I am saying at the end of grade 10 we should make it more of a feeling of accomplishment by those students who then choose to take alternative paths for their future. I have been present at a number of the graduation ceremonies for those students who have achieved that letter of achievement. It is sometimes in the back room of the school, not the auditorium, and it is done at 3:30 in the afternoon. You are there and really it is downplayed quite significantly as compared to what other people have gone through this past weekend or some time in June for the other OSSGD that they get out of the school. I just think we need to give that student more of a feeling of accomplishment.

It would say something to employers. A lot of employers still use grade 10 and some use grade 12 as a minimum level. If we do, as some people have suggested, ensure that there is a high component of literacy and numeracy in it, perhaps it will then have more significance to the employer who looks at that person at that point in time.

But I certainly recognize that not everyone is going to want to get an OSSGD; and to me, it also enhances what you are saying. I think you are the first board to really state this–you can correct me, Mr. Johnston–in number eight on maintaining of special occupational and vocational schools.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Ottawa did too.

Mr. Keyes: There was only one other one, then. I was not present in Ottawa. That is why I can be forgiven for not having observed that.

Mr. Ballinger: Your age is a factor as well, I might add.

Mr. Mahoney: Don't you read Hansard?

Mr. Keyes: Right; only in my sleep. I would suggest that you have indicated that it helps to enhance it if we use this other concept of the type of certificate that a person would receive after

grades 9 and 10. I am not sure what you do at the moment with your grades 9 and 10 vocational schools, or do your vocational schools go right on through, I guess, to grade 12? What is your proportion of–I do not want to use the term "dropout"–those who end their education at grade 10 in those vocational schools? How many who start there go on to grade 12?

Mr. Hodgins: About 60 to 70 of the students in our vocational school who come into the grade 9 stream complete their grade 12 diplomas in a school of about 450. That is at a basic-level program, many of whom are special education, exceptional students. I do not want to give a percentage because of the factor that I mentioned earlier.

One of the things we found through a number of re-entry programs where students have dropped out and then come back in is the importance of short-term goals and relatively small modules of instruction so that they can achieve some success. I would agree with your contention that having a midway diploma at about age 16 or grade 10 certainly would reinforce a short-term goal and help them to continue with their education instead of saying: "Oh, it is too far down the pipe. We are just giving up."

Mr. Keyes: I think when they look at the 30 credits they must get, that in itself is a factor in maybe giving up a little prematurely. Therefore, making it a bit more of an achievement milestone in their educational career would have some merit.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Can I ask a supplementary while we are pursuing this? How do you respond to those who say that if we then move it down to grade 10 where we are trying to get the basics, we are not able to do that now at grade 12 for many of the graduates? We are getting the chamber of commerce and others coming in here claiming that the graduates are not able to deal with the work world as they would be able to deal with it in grade 12.

If we move it back to grade 10 as our notion of what the basic level is, how do you argue the fact that that can be accomplished in the way that will satisfy employers with that certificate?

Mr. Phillips: I do not think you will ever satisfy business, to be quite honest, because the needs of business are so specialized and so diverse. I think they do have a criticism when they say they are not completely literate in their language. That is an aim that should be our primary aim.

Yet, as I said before, despite the fact that many of these students have worked with many dedicated people, it does not happen. I am really at a loss to be able to say that we can do that, because there are so many other factors in it. I do not think, though, that we will ever be able to satisfy, even at the university level, the requirements of business and industry. I think that business and industry have to accept the fact that whenever they have an employee, there is an education component built into the recruitment process.

When I started in business and industry, I had a course to take me from where I was to where they wanted me to work. I think more and more employers should be recognizing that. It is not so much a case of not being literate as of not being literate in the vocabulary and the customs of that particular company. I am not sure that you are ever going to be able to satisfy them.

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Mr. Keyes: Just one other question quickly, and that is–again, it certainly reflects what you told us about the makeup of your student population–how have you been able, and what emphasis have you put on the continuing adult education aspect, and also the opportunity to drop back in easily for those who have left the system? Do you want to make a quick comment? You must have that as a major component and may find some restrictions recently placed upon it.

Mr. Hodgins: Our adult day school is now our largest secondary school, with just about 1,500 students. We also have nearly 1,000 other students who have come in through a series of re-entry programs or just straight into the regular secondary school programs in schools, so that our adult enrolment has been the area which is increasing and, in particular, the areas of business skills and some life skills and in language. Many immigrants and other members of the community have taken this opportunity to enhance their education and get language training along with their skills development. It has been one of our big success stories in the last five to six years.

Mr. Keyes: Can we have a breakdown on the age categories, primarily, that–

Mr. Hodgins: It really covers the whole gamut. They start as early as 18 and 19, where they have been out of school for a year or two, and it goes right up to 60- and 70-year-olds.

Mr. Keyes: Is it one of the regulations that they must have been out of school for a year or two before you have them back in there?

Mr. Hodgins: Yes.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you. I will pass.

Mr. Reycraft: On the certificate or letter of achievement that you have suggested after grade 10, if the certificate of education is provided for in OSIS after 14 credits, if the requirements were changed so that it was offered or was presented to all students when they achieve that milestone instead of just on request, as it is said to be in OSIS, would that then meet with your satisfaction?

Mr. Hodgins: In keeping with the proposal that we have a different packaging at the grade 9 and 10 level, yes, it would resolve the issue. I think "on request" implies that it is not a particularly noteworthy award, and we would like to see the impact of that upgraded. That would be the way to do it.

Mr. Reycraft: It is also, of course, only available, according to OSIS, to those who are leaving school and not going on to try to get their Ontario secondary school diploma.

I wanted to ask also about your proposal for a package of general-level studies in grades 9 and 10. A lot of the students who now go into basic-level courses experience academic difficulty in elementary school, and the only reason they go into those basic-level courses is that they are not yet 16 and therefore have to stay in school. For a lot of those kids, the basic-level courses give them the first opportunity they have had in many years, perhaps ever, to experience success, and often that success leads to their wanting to get something out of the education system instead of just staying in it, as they are forced to do until they are 16. Going to a general package of studies, such as you have suggested for grades 9 and 10, would that not rob those students of that chance to get that success that leads to more success?

Mr. Phillips: It depends at what level and what is in the package. I think the package has to be sufficiently diverse that it gives these students the opportunity for success.

Mr. Reycraft: But if we are not able to offer them that success now in grade 7 and grade 8, why would they be able to expect to achieve it in grade 9 under your sort of proposal? If it can be done, if the program can be altered in such a way that they experience that success in grades 9 and 10, why can we not do it in grades 7 and 8?

Mr. Phillips: Frankly, I think we could. The intermediate division starts at grade 7. I think that perhaps it is–I would not say a fallacy–it has been a problem that we have regarded grades 7 and 8 as a precursor, as a prerequisite, for moving into higher levels of education, whereas perhaps the package could start in the intermediate division by itself. In other words, it should be at grades 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not understand. Your perspective at the moment is that vocational streaming is in fact reducing that kind of success result; yet presumably, from the statistical analysis of what happens to kids–whether you want to accept your figure of 60 out of 450 going through with all the other variables or take any of the other statistics–it has not been working. Why do you think that would be more successful than what they are suggesting?

Mr. Reycraft: I did not mean to imply that it happens for all students who are in basic-level programs, but for a lot of them the lower level of difficulty that is there in the basic-level programs gives them the first opportunity to experience success that they have had in several years. For a lot of them, that is the turn-on to getting something out of educational opportunities. A general package, it just seems to me, would not give them that same kind of opportunity. I recognize the fact that that is not the case for a lot of students.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Seventy per cent are not going past grade 10 anyhow, so I am not sure the proof is in the pudding. We will get into this debate tomorrow, I can tell. I should not interrupt you now.

Mr. Reycraft: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: I am sure Mr. Reycraft is not giving up on that point; he is just adjourning the discussion till tomorrow.

Interjection.

Madam Chairman: You have noticed.

I would very much like to thank the Board of Education for the City of York for your contribution to our committee today. Thank you for coming.

Our next delegation will be the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations. Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee; I guess I should say welcome back to our committee. We are very much looking forward to your comments today. We have had a number of home and school associations that have come before us–not as many as I would like, but obviously, I am sure that, as volunteer associations, they find it extremely difficult to get their resources together and present a brief to our committee. So we are particularly looking forward to your remarks.

We have allocated half an hour for your presentation and we are hoping at least part of that time will be reserved for questions from the members. Please begin whenever you are ready by introducing yourself for the purpose of Hansard.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS INC.

Mrs. Bawden: Thank you very much. The traffic jam here was just about as bad as it was in London this morning with the snow.

I am very pleased to be here this afternoon. Our lineup keeps changing. I apologize to you and to Ms. Mellor for the confusion I may be causing her recording work.

Madam Chairman: Ms. Mellor shines in the face of adversity. That is when she always comes to the fore.

Mrs. Bawden: I am very grateful for that.

Madam Chairman: She is quite used to dealing with snowstorms and traffic jams.

Interjection.

Mrs. Bawden: I do not dare say that.

I am Mary Bawden, president of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations. I have with me today Mrs. Norma McGuire, who is the central Canadian vice-president of the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation Inc., and Ontario's substance and child abuse chairman; and June Hodge, who is president of the region E board of the Ontario federation, which takes in the Metro Toronto area and Halton, Peel and York counties.

Without any further comment, I would like to start at the introduction page of our submission and say once more that we appreciate very much this opportunity to make a presentation to the select committee on education. We are also pleased that several of our home and school councils have made presentations from across the province because we feel this will help you to understand the wide number of interpretations that can be placed on education programs and terminology. Sometimes I feel that is haunting me when I try and move myself into different locations.

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For instance, the Radwanski report, the Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts, referred to co-operative programs in terms that led some of our groups to feel that this was part of his part-time work concern. In most of our boards, co-operative education requires students to spend a semester, a full term, in the world of work and industry.

It is our hope that the select committee will discuss programming with schools and school boards in many parts of the province so that they can be cognizant of the programming implications and interpretations. I guess I am saying schools and school boards because, even though they have not come here, there may be others out there that could be helpful.

In the following pages we submit to you our members' comments on some areas of general concern, as well as streaming, grade promotion, semestering and OSIS. We have also included concerns regarding province-wide testing.

The Ontario education system is one of the finest in the world, and for this reason great care must be taken to ensure that the system is not weakened and fragmented when changes are proposed.

Recommendation 1: We may sound like a broken record, but we recommend once more that the select committee, the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Education proceed with the utmost caution so that our children's education will not be jeopardized.

Adequate funding for education and equal opportunity for Ontario students to receive quality education have always had high priority with our members. We are truly alarmed that our public education system may be engulfed in chaos and the students at present in school may become the losers, and we do not wish this to happen.

Many demands are being made on the school system to provide additional programs to meet the needs of students, and we are thinking of acquired immune deficiency syndrome and day care. Some of these demands, we feel, really go beyond the perceived mandate of the Ministry of Education.

Recommendation 2: For that reason, we recommend that provincial interministerial co-operation and funding be guaranteed and that funds for these add-on programs be provincial monies over and above the funding already allocated to education.

As we considered the goals of education, we understood the difficulties faced by you as government leaders establishing that list or perhaps a new list. We feel it is important for the government to clearly outline its educational priorities so that parents will have a clear understanding of what can be expected from the education system.

We broached this subject at our fall board of directors meeting held the first day of October. The board of directors adopted unanimously a recommendation to bring before you, that perhaps a statement such as this should precede the list of goals we have up on the wall now.

Recommendation 3: I truly believe this is what the ministry and government are trying to provide now at least, that the province of Ontario provide the best educational opportunities for every student regardless of any student's socio-economic environment, and limited only by the expectations and abilities of the student.

I will now ask June Hodge to continue. Norma McGuire has a break because she has been off planning a conference for the Drug Education Co-ordinating Council.

Mrs. Hodge: Should the provincial government decide to move to eliminate streaming, it must be prepared to dramatically increase the province's financial commitment to education, so that regular class size is cut in half, additional remedial staff is provided, increased professional development is available for teachers, computer use is increased, stronger emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy, teacher pre-service programs are restructured and greater emphasis is placed on pre-service training.

It is clear that substantially more funds must be added in order to accomplish the above needs. Simply redistributing tax dollars will only place an unacceptable added burden on the local taxpayer. Additional funding must be added.

There would appear to be little support among our members for abandoning the present method of streaming students in our schools. To quote just a few Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. members providing input to our response to the Radwanski recommendations to eliminate streaming:

"This is ludicrous! All children have the right to a quality education. Each child has specific abilities and weaknesses and each individual's potential should be realized. To presume a common level for all–the level has to be so low as to make education even more mediocre than it is in some areas now.

"This is neither realistic nor desirable. Students are too varied in ability, interests, goals and needs. To try to force all of the students into the same mould would be to move education back 30 years.

"Everyone felt that because no two people can grasp and learn at the same rate, we must disagree."

Recommendation 4: No further discussion be entertained on the abandonment of streaming.

We understand grade promotion to refer to the promotion system that existed in high schools up to about 1970, in which a student's success in the school year was dependent on passing all subjects.

In our view, the introduction of the credit system was a major advancement in the Ontario education system because a student's progress was no longer hindered by a weakness in a particular subject. Any thought of returning to grade promotion is a backward step, a return to the Dark Ages. There is no clear evidence that having a child repeat a full year is in the child's best interest.

Clearly, the focus should be to allow a child to progress in the subjects successfully completed and to make remedial help available in areas of difficulty.

A child's self-esteem is preserved if he is advanced and given remedial help, but failure is traumatic and devastating. In our opinion, having a student repeat a subject or subjects in which he has been successful, as happened with grade promotion, defies logic.

The credit system stimulates students to develop their strengths and enables them to cope with their weaknesses.

Recommendation 5: That the credit system be retained as a promotion mechanism.

The advantages and disadvantages of semestering have been discussed and debated for several years and numerous papers by educators have set out the pros and cons at length.

Parents, too, have concerns about which method of organizing a school is preferable. One secondary school home and school association studied the issue and found that the last full study of semestering was conducted in 1977. At the annual meeting of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations held in April 1988, delegates adopted a resolution calling for an immediate and full study of semestering. We repeat that request.

Recommendation 6: That a full study be undertaken to determine the effects of semestering on the quality of education in the secondary schools in Ontario and that this study be completed by January 1, 1990.

It should be noted, however, that whenever a school is considering changing from nonsemestered to semestered or vice versa, we as parents feel very strongly that any change should occur only after full consultation with the community.

Recommendation 7: That schools be required to consult the community before a decision about semestering is finalized.

Resolutions brought forward at our annual meeting and adopted by association delegates from all parts of Ontario have requested the Ministry of Education to implement Canadian studies, to provide educational opportunities for the handicapped, to require a core of subjects and program content at the secondary school level, etc.

We were, therefore, pleased to see these same recommendations in the secondary education review project, SERP, and their implementation in OSIS. Educators are still striving to implement the new OSIS curricula. Sufficient time has not been allowed to determine the full benefits.

Some of the good things which have come from OSIS are advanced, general and basic levels of difficulty, co-operative education, a code of student behaviour, Ontario student transcript, major curriculum reviews and revisions, improvement of the credit system, compulsory courses and guidance in grades 7 and 8.

One criticism we might make is that there is not enough emphasis on physical education and health education.

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Many recommendations contained in the Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts are contradictory to the philosophy of OSIS and would have a serious negative impact for curriculum, staffing and funding. The first students to receive the Ontario secondary school diploma–OSSD–as dictated by OSIS have just graduated, in June, 1988. We feel it is premature and inappropriate to consider conducting a review of the effectiveness of OSIS at this time.

Recommendation 8: That OSIS continue in its current direction so that (a) the Ministry of Education can continue to monitor and evaluate OSIS and (b) universities, colleges, business and industry have a reasonable amount of time to assess the capabilities of the OSSD graduates.

Recommendation 9: That a comprehensive evaluation of OSIS, based on widespread input from the education community, parents, OSSD graduates, students and business and industry be conducted by the Ministry of Education in four years' time.

Mrs. Bawden: Province-wide testing is receiving a lot of attention. It is appropriate for the province and school boards to use various testing instruments to determine how effectively program content and concepts are understood by students. However, these testing tools must be used to evaluate the system, not the child, and that testing must serve the system, not overpower it.

Through our representatives to the provincial advisory committee on evaluation policies and practices, we are aware of the provincial review processes announced in February, 1988. This too is a step that has been requested through the home and school resolutions. More time is needed to assess the provincial reviews adequately. It should be made clear that province-wide examinations are not an acceptable solution.

Recommendation 10: That the present evaluation system of provincial reviews be continued.

In conclusion, we thank the select committee for this opportunity to present the views of our members on these issues which are critical to the education of our children.

It is important that the Ministry of Education, in reviewing Ontario's education system, continue to work co-operatively with school boards and continue to allow local autonomy so that program can be flexible enough to meet the needs of each student. Change for the sake of change is not a healthy approach.

We abhor the fragmented comparisons between the Ontario education system and those in other parts of the world. To look at the education system in isolation from the rest of society and those societal pressures is inadequate and inappropriate. Ontario's education system should serve Ontario's students in the context of our Ontario society.

We ask the select committee and the government of Ontario to proceed with care as they make recommendations regarding the education of our children. We believe the Ontario education system is already successful, but its role must be continually examined to achieve and maintain excellence in education and the best for each child.

These were difficult topics to handle in isolation from each other, because they are very interrelated. It is also difficult not to become confused between the secondary and the elementary panels. I noticed, as we went through the streaming, that we were really talking about the secondary, not discussing the elementary. But we did not say that in our brief, so I would like to point those things out to you. We were trying to maintain as much secondary in our presentation as we could.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for a very thought-provoking and thoughtful presen-

tation, although I did notice Mr. Johnston absolutely blanching when you got to recommendation 4, "No further discussion be entertained on the abandonment of streaming." I think his arguments for the next two weeks in committee were just shot down with that one recommendation. Am I maligning you again?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Always. But remember, I get back to you much more viciously in the end. It is a dangerous tactic to employ.

Madam Chairman: Just for a change, we will start the questioning off with Mr. Keyes, followed by Mr. Johnston, followed by Mr. Miclash.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you very much for the brief. I think you have to be congratulated on the fact that you have been fairly supportive of the ministry and what is happening, but quick to point out there are changes you believe should be made and, if the changes are to be made, the care with which we should try to make those changes so that we do not upset the situation, which has provided an excellent program.

You did touch on the fact that you kept a lot of your orientation to the secondary area. I just wonder if you want to comment a bit on grade promotion as seen from an elementary point of view. We are now pretty well getting general agreement on group support, what is happening in the secondary level with credit systems being a more appropriate way for promotion. If it is appropriate there, we have to look at an answer to the question, why is it not appropriate that we have some changes at the elementary level?

Did you do any work on looking at changes that might occur there so as to get away from strict grade-by-grade promotion and the retention we have talked about? Retention amounts in the elementary level of two other boards today were quite excessive, and in fact more excessive in the last board that presented before us than even previously. How do you see grade promotion?

Mrs. Bawden: At the elementary level?

Mr. Keyes: Yes.

Mrs. Bawden: I guess one of the things that became focused in my mind was that we needed to go back and take a look at the early primary education project and see where it fitted into this whole process. I guess I would like to bring a question into the committee: Is there any intention to do anything further in regards to elementary as far as input goes?

Madam Chairman: At this stage the committee has not decided on its future agenda. That is certainly one of the proposals, that we do look at the elementary panel, but we do have quite an extensive list, so we are not sure at this specific stage where we will be going in the spring.

Mrs. Bawden: Okay. Then in answer to you, Mr. Keyes, I would ask Norma if she can bring her mind back to the early primary education review project, which she worked on a long time ago, because I think perhaps it is a partial answer to your question on grade promotion.

Mr. Keyes: While she is thinking about that one, because I caught her off guard there, I think it is so essential, just this whole idea that the parent groups like your own are there as some of the PR side, frankly, for the educational system if changes are going to be made. Representing parents, largely, you are going to be in the best position to do it. Therefore, if we can look at getting away from grade promotion and have it be by divisions or whatever, it is not going to happen without support from your side of the organization.

Mrs. McGuire: I will try to answer the question. In the early primary project–and I was looking at early childhood long before I was involved with the early primary education project–I know there have been areas when young people, young children, have been able to progress in the reading area when maybe their math skills or their arithmetic skills were not as strong and they were able to progress in that way, by being in a classroom with a teacher who was able to cope with that, perhaps by having a split grade, which is not necessarily the answer you are looking for. I think they are flexible in elementary school because they are in the classroom with the children all the time, whereas in the secondary school they are not there with the same teacher all the time.

I think they can build some support into that by giving them remedial work in the math and yet having them progress in the reading or in the spelling or vice versa. Frequently, boys particularly are strong in math where their reading skills, their spelling skills, their writing skills are not as strong, yet their math skills and their science skills are extremely strong. I think in the elementary school you can work through that way. Does that help any?

Mr. Keyes: I think you are still saying that we will kind of retain grade promotion, looking after weaknesses of students by a teacher who may reach back to pull them forward with them. You seem to suggest that.

Mrs. McGuire: I guess my own children experienced what they called a grouping, a

family grouping, where they could progress and stay with the same children in the same classroom through, say, their three years of school. In that way they were able to deal with the problems in some way and catch them up, and they could go on.

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Mr. Keyes: I have been suggesting that perhaps we should use division promotions instead of grade promotions–primary, junior, etc.–but I am not sure whether you would give any support to that.

Mrs. McGuire: They were promoted perhaps through the division, but then at the end of the division, there had to be some decisions made.

Mr. Keyes: Let me veer away for a moment quickly and ask a question on streaming.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Keyes, I was just wondering; we have Mr. Johnston, Mr. Villeneuve and Mr. Miclash left and just over five minutes.

Mr. Keyes: I should be happy to cede.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I know you are always very gracious.

Mr. Keyes: I could keep them going all day. If there is no one on the other side for either party, as it was this morning, we would just keep going right through; no problem.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston and Mr. Villeneuve are about to make up for that, I am sure.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have been so nice to each other up to this point, Ken.

Mr. Reycraft: Familiarity breeds–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Breeds–what is it again; I am not sure.

First, I really appreciate the brief. As always with briefs, we want to pick and choose the things we would like to see and the things we are not happy with. I am delighted you came up with your definition for the overall social goal. That is really important for the committee's considerations.

I am a little disturbed, though, by your sort of notion that no further discussion be entertained on the abandonment of streaming, given that streaming has a greater socioeconomic characteristic to it than any pedagogical or academic capacity to it. Almost all studies show that. Unfortunately, we do not do enough tracking to see what happens with it.

We have had, I do not know how many, definitions of streaming before us. You seem to have locked on to the Radwanskian view of streaming, which is certainly not shared even by the Ontario Federation of Labour, which yesterday was totally opposed to streaming. Its notions of a destreamed system were very different in many key ways to what Radwanski is saying. Certainly, the notion that you teach to a block idea of one level of student is not part of what most people's notion of a destreamed system is.

Given that there are destreamed systems, on some definition or other, operating within Ontario right at the moment, as well as attempts to do this in other provinces and in the United States, why is it you are so adamantly opposed to any discussion of moving to that when we know how bad the streamed system has been for the lowest socioeconomic group. You say now we want to make, a goal, that we that assert now, even though we have taken it as understood. Why so definitive?

Mrs. Bawden: I have to refer to the comments from our members. The three we quoted came from Kapuskasing, Durham and London, and we had the same thing coming at us from the Thunder Bay area as well. Our members were really opposed to our saying anything other than, "Let's keep it."

I think one of the inadequacies in our brief is that we did not address the fact that some children perhaps might want to move up in the streaming streams and that this should be available to them. You just get mixed into a situation of that sort where there are so many things that are in addition to that block statement.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of the things, for instance–I do not know whether this is along Mr. Keyes's line or not–is the point that a lot of people are coming before us, including boards, like the one just previous to you as a matter of fact, suggesting that grades 9 and 10 should be effectively destreamed, that decisions are made too early and that a better base education might be expected by grade 10, rather than our extended notion of grade 12 in a way now. When you say there can be no discussion, you are basically saying that even that kind of a notion is not debatable.

Mrs. Bawden: No.

Mrs. Hodge: It is in the definiton of streaming. One of the things I feel, which comes from parents, is that in the last five years there have been so many committees looking at the various aspects of education that everybody is getting really panicky. They think: "Oh, my gosh, here comes another committee, and they're going to change all these nice things. We've finally got used to the credit system and we know

where our kids are going when they get to high school."

I think there is also a great concern because that decision has to be made very early, as far as streaming goes. Having grown up in a mining town, I have never noticed the negative effects you say are so prevalent in the reports; anyway, they must be there.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Virtually no study I know of has ever been produced actually tracking kids put into a basic stream which did not show there was a really disproportionate representation by lower socioeconomic group and by handicap in the old days. That combination clearly was always disproportionate in almost every study that has ever been done.

On the other side, as you say, if we went back to the 1950s, there was another means of holding back all those kids in the regular classroom; it comes back to grade promotion. They were kept back three grades in public school and by the time they got to grade 9 at age 16 or 17, they felt out of place and wanted out. That system, as we knew it, I agree with you totally, is not one we want to go back to. I do not think there is any evidence anywhere and no study I know of to show that the present streaming system has been useful to people from a lower socioeconomic order or that it has been effective.

Mrs. McGuire: For children who cannot cope, there needs to be some sort of streaming. If you find you have the brightest child and the child with the most difficulties in the same classroom, the child with the most difficulties is not going to feel accepted by those at the top and vice versa. There are all sorts of interactions that happen that are not related necessarily to marks. There are social interactions that happen.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You are arguing, not to get into a debate, for not having exceptional children in the classroom. When you make that argument that they do not fit in, that is what the old notion of a disabled person was about. That was how we used to deal with that concept. Now we are saying that just because there are some different levels of ability–I would suggest you look at a co-operative teaching model. Often in that situation, with peer mentoring and that kind of thing, there is a very healthy relationship and acceptance of all the kids within a heterogeneous class.

Always this notion is brought up that a basic-level school or a vocational school allows somebody to succeed. I remember in Ottawa somebody said, "He can become the head boy or the head girl." Well, one kid can in that school and the rest of them all understand that they are in the dummy school and that they have been labelled, and then that is really clear, except Glencoe District High School.

Mrs. McGuire: They are labelled regardless.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just think there are many more holistic ways of dealing with it, which we do in the public elementary panel, but as soon as we get to the secondary panel, we are saying that somehow is no longer a healthy message about our society.

Mrs. McGuire: You must have people who are very talented in dealing with those students and I would think there must be smaller class groupings.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not disagree with you. The argument goes the other way as well, that you need your most talented people in the basic-level courses in the high school, but you have the least talented. That is the lowest-status teaching position.

Mrs. McGuire: That is right. You do.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I promised I would not get into a debate about this, did I not?

Madam Chairman: Are you ready to climb down off your soapbox yet?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Certainly not, because you said my arguments were defeated and I am just telling you that I am mustering still.

Madam Chairman: As you can tell, the argument on streaming has not quite been abandoned. I suspect it will be going on.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have a feeling you will not be able to shut us up.

Mrs. Bawden: May I tell Mr. Johnston who the kids I feel the most sorry for are? They are those who can just pass. Those kids need more help than the ones who are streamed off and the exceptional.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I agree.

Mrs. Bawden: The kid who can just pass; do not forget those kids.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Of course not, but an individualized program for those kids is the key, not streaming by some sort of notion of a homogeneous group. It is never homogeneous; never. There is always a range and there will always be those people who are left out no matter how you decide to categorize human beings. I just think it is a horrible message to send out to our society. As early as grade 9 we are saying to some kids, "This is where you are in society and we will categorize you by putting you into

separate classes or separate schools, and that is where you are."

If that is the message we want about our society in general, then let's do it, but if that is not what we want in our society, then I think maybe we have to look at structures which reflect what we want as outcomes in society as well. I told you we would have to debate this thing.

1520

Madam Chairman: It would be interesting if we had some idea of what students, children who are actually in basic and general, particularly the ones who are in vocational schools and schools that are not composite schools and are geared to only one of the levels of difficulty, feel, whether they feel as Mr. Johnston thinks they do.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We had one tell us yesterday, under several questions.

Madam Chairman: The only thing I have seen on it was right after the Radwanski report came out when CITY-TV went to various and sundry schools in the Metro area and talked to students at various levels of difficulty. I did not sense that same feeling of hopelessness, but again, it was very subjective. They just chose randomly and we have no objective criteria to go on.

I think we will go to Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. Villeneuve: Thank you, ladies from the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations. I congratulate you for making your points very clearly and unequivocally, as Mr. Johnston has taken you to task on.

I notice on recommendations 6 and 7, regarding semestering, that you are not quite as emphatic. As a matter of fact, I see you as almost neutral. We have had a number of people make presentations to us, particularly students, who seem to like the semestered system. Teachers seem to like it to a lesser degree. I understand where you are coming from as parents, and as one who still has four within the system. By the time the parents catch up to what has been going on in the schools, there may be one who has missed the boat. I think I understand where you are coming from.

However, on semestering, we now have situations where we have students who have part-time jobs bordering on full-time jobs, and the semestering business fits in better with what they do, not necessarily pertaining to school activities, but pertaining to extracurricular activities. Have you had the experience where semestering happened without the local populace having had input? It sounds, from recommendation 7, as if someone within the system has had a very bad experience here and you do not want to see it repeated. Could you just comment on that, please.

Mrs. Bawden: I think we put that in to ensure that there was not a bad experience down the road, as this is studied, because it may bring forward changes that are totally unexpected by some people. At this point, no, we have not had a report of a bad experience.

Mrs. Hodge: No, it has been more the other way, at any rate.

Mr. Villeneuve: That is just to ensure, then?

Mrs. Bawden: Yes.

Mr. Villeneuve: So we need not worry about that one too much, other than to make sure that there is good, open discussion from the board, from the teaching profession, from the parents, and of course from the students as well.

This will be my last question. Back to the part-time job and the full-time student, or the reverse, could you make some comments on what your thoughts would be as representatives of the parents of these children, who sometimes have more to say about this than the parents would like to see.

Mrs. Hodge: We discussed this at a secondary school in Etobicoke not so long ago, and I think a lot of parents are not aware of the ramifications it is having on their students' marks. I know several educators are very concerned about this. They come to school tired. They have not done their homework. In a lot of cases, it is not economics; they are not working because they have to. In a lot of cases, I think parents are really not aware of the effect it is having on the students at school.

Mr. Villeneuve: I think you have put your finger right on it. I think that in many areas it is not economic; it is by choice. It is economic, if you wish, to have some of those perks in life, but not real economic need. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. A final question by Mr. Miclash.

Mr. Miclash: I will be brief. I was interested more in your organization, your association and how you go out to other parents in other communities, as the Home and School, and suggest that they should also become a link between the home and the school. We have heard from a lot of people who feel they just do not have that link between the parents and the school. I am interested in your association and how you get that message out to the parents.

Mrs. Bawden: With a great deal of difficulty.

Mr. Miclash: I have not heard of Home and School since away back when my mother was involved in that. It does not seem to be a thing in our community recently. As I say, there seems to be a missing link there. I am just wondering how you promote yourselves.

Mrs. Bawden: We seem to be in a period of time when there are many demands on everyone's free time. That causes us as much of a problem as anyone else. I think we are just recovering from the effects of a lot of governmental-type changes. I am thinking of county boards, township schools, things which fragmented some communities; perhaps I should use the bigger word and say fragmented the communities within the county. In some areas, we are just starting to truly recover from that and there is a lot more interest in Home and School.

We have not really made a concerted effort to get out there and reach the whole world. We are trying to increase our numbers in the areas where we really are. I guess, to the limits of our strengths and abilities, we are trying to promote the organization and build it.

Mr. Miclash: What advice would I give parents who would be interested in your association?

Mrs. Bawden: Contact our federation and we will try to find someone to discuss it with them.

Mr. Miclash: Straight through, and then you will help them out? That is great.

Mrs. Hodge: I would like to comment. It is a grass-roots organization and the parents and the community have to want our type of organization, which is more structured than just a parent group. They have to want to make the commitment themselves. We do not just go in there and form it. We only go by request. I think that is very important.

Mrs. Bawden: I quarrel with our being called volunteers, because we are indeed members. Maybe the only thing we do voluntarily is step up to the membership table and buy our membership card. After that, we may be conscripted or pressed into whatever position we arrive at, but truly the one thing we do voluntarily is buy a membership in Home and School. But we have to buy that through an existing association and maybe that is our big weakness. We are working on trying to overcome as many of those weaknesses as we can at this point.

Madam Chairman: As I mentioned, we had presentations from various Home and School associations, I think in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Windsor and two in north Toronto. So we did have a smattering, not as much as we would like, but we very much appreciated the fact that you took the time and effort to come before our committee today.

Mrs. McGuire: I think that when associations know the federation will be presenting on their behalf, they give us the information. Frequently, they do it that way rather than presenting themselves. They come to the federation with their information and it is done from that level.

Madam Chairman: I suspect the other factor was the timing. It was very difficult, I think, for many volunteer associations to get together and use their resources in the summer, when so many of their members were throughout the city and throughout the province.

Mrs. Hodge: We have spent a lot of summers around pools, working on briefs for different governments.

Madam Chairman: It is one of the more enjoyable ways in which to write a brief; maybe not one of the more enjoyable ways to enjoy the pool. Thank you for your contribution today.

Mrs.Bawden: Thank you very much for having us. Our very best wishes on your role as your prepare your report.

Madam Chairman: Our next delegation will be the Advisory Council on Special Education. Good afternoon. It is nice to see you back.

1530

Mrs. Nichols: Thank you. Fourth and last time.

Madam Chairman: Three is the limit. After three, you cannot come back any more, at least not until the next session.

Mr. Ballinger: After three you have to pay.

Mrs. Nichols: Do I have to leave in that case?

Madam Chairman: That is when the whip comes out.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mrs. Nichols: On behalf of the Ministry of Education Advisory Council on Special Education, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. The format of our presentation will be that I will introduce the other people who are presenting along with me, plus a couple of members of council who are in the audience. I will make some introductory comments on the makeup and functioning of council. There are comments on two specific areas of issues from two of the presenters. Then we will, among the four of us, read into the

record our recommendations and we will be available for your questions.

The advisory council is an unusual group inasmuch as it is made up of representatives of all the various stakeholders in special education. It has been in existence now for about 10 years. The representation on council is as follows: the Alliance for Children–Ontario, which sends four parent representatives; the Council for Exceptional Children; the Ontario Council of Administrators of Special Education; the Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials; the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association; the French supervisory officers' association; the Ontario Advisory Council for the Physically Handicapped; the Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers; the Ontario Medical Association; the Ontario Psychological Association; the Ontario Teachers' Federation; and the Ontario School Trustees' Council.

My fellow presenters this afternoon are Mrs. Margaret Walker, who is a representative of the Alliance for Children and who I believe is also in front of you for the fourth time, so our penalty is shared–

Mr. Ballinger: At least $100.

Mrs. Nichols: –Sister Frances Walton, who is the superintendent of student services from the London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, and Mrs. Judith Shapira, who is the chief psychologist with the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board. You know me. I am Eva Nichols.

As I mentioned, the council is an unusual group inasmuch as there are all these different people coming forward to discuss a variety of issues relating to special education and we fulfil a role in the sense that we advise the special education and provincial schools' branch and, in some instances, the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) on issues relating to special education.

In addition to our advisory role, we are actually a working group. In many instances, a small group will get together to look in some detail at specific issues. These may be particular reports. For example, we had a working group that looked at the Fullan-Connelly report on teacher education and we have had working groups looking at things like day care issues, French immersion and so on, but when those small groups report back to council, we arrive at our recommendations to the minister by consensus.

In my four years' experience on council, we have never had to go to a vote. Basically, we talk back and forth and debate until we can reach a consensus whereby, while it may not represent everybody's point of view 100 per cent, nobody goes away feeling that somehow his or her opinion was not heard and was not respected.

Mr. Ballinger: It sounds like the Legislature.

Mr. Mahoney: It sure doesn't.

Mrs. Nichols: Mr. Ballinger, I do not know that I want to comment on that.

Mr. Ballinger: I just wanted to make sure Richard was awake; that was all.

Mrs. Nichols: Oh, I think he is awake.

We present a report to the Minister of Education at the end of each term and in that we may make one, two or dozens of recommendations, depending on the things we have looked at in the previous period of time.

When you first invited this council's representation, that was when the Alliance for Children was before you and we made reference to the fact that the alliance felt very strongly that council should continue and that the many recommendations we made to the Minister of Education last January for the previous council should be acted upon.

You will be glad to know that since that time council has been reappointed, with a somewhat different membership but the same organizations, just in some cases different individuals. In fact, the reason you happen to have this group in front of you is that we, and Mrs. Pollard and Mrs. Cowie in the audience, are the people who are continuing into the next council.

The first meeting of the 1989-90 council will occur October 27 and 28. We understand that many of the recommendations that we did make to the minister have been looked at. In some instances, action has resulted, such as the issue around special education services for children who are enrolled in French immersion programs and regulation 262. Once we get together, of course, we will have a great deal more information about the specifics of just exactly where all our recommendations are going.

In terms of the specific issues, Sister Frances and Dr. Schapira are going to make some comments relating to streaming, grade promotion, regulation 262, research on retention and so on. After that, we will move to the recommendations.

Sister Walton: I am going to read five recommendations that relate specifically to streaming and promotion and a little bit about OSIS because I think they address the topics you have been hearing about. I promise that we will not read the five of them over again a second time.

The presenters to this committee are dealing with two topics, streaming and promotion, which relate directly to a number of recommendations made by the ministry's Advisory Council on Special Education. These recommendations are that the Ministry of Education's current position of enabling each child to maximize his or her potential by providing a full continuum of programs and services depending on individual learning strengths and needs be upheld; and that the Ministry of Education continue to encourage all school boards to offer a full range of placement options to meet the needs within each area of exceptionality.

Continuous promotion goes hand in hand with excellent evaluation. Some recommendations that address evaluation are that in the province-wide student evaluation initiative, accommodations to be made for exceptional students in regular classrooms be an important consideration, not only with regard to the actual test taking, but also with regard to how an exceptional student is evaluated in relation to his or her classroom peers and how that evaluation is reported to the parents.

Further, it is recommended that modified student evaluation techniques, such as oral testing and less formal but more frequent assessments, be used at the secondary level; that students be given the opportunity to have input into the evaluation techniques used; and that professional development of educators and support staff focus on ways to modify evaluation practices on alternative strategies and programs for potential dropouts and on the development of more positive attitudes towards students who have difficulties; and finally, that the Ministry of Education reaffirm the principles of OSIS with regard to the access of exceptional students to the appropriate level of secondary credits to ensure that exceptional pupils are not automatically steered towards basic-level courses.

I particularly enjoyed your discussion prior to this. I hope it can continue.

Mr. Reycraft: I am sure it will.

Madam Chairman: And continue.

Sister Walton: Streaming or ability grouping and continuous promotion supported by a positive approach to student evaluation can contribute positively to the creation of a full continuum of programs and placement options for exceptional students and create a school environment where an exceptional student can thrive.

Let me explain by recounting some well-known facts, but setting them in a particular context. Identification of a student as exceptional is a means of recognizing special strengths or needs in one or more areas of development. Identification as exceptional should generate greater awareness and understanding on the part of others who share that student's world. It may lead to appropriate accommodations in the student's physical environment and it clearly facilitates general curricular adaptations and specific program accommodations.

It is not labelling for the sake of the sake of organization or administrative convenience. It is a professional recognition of needs and strengths, accompanied by a commitment to provide for them. The complexity of that individual's spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional development, however, cannot be defined or fully described by identification as exceptional. That dynamic process of total human development is nurtured as the student enters into relationships with peers and significant others in the school environment. That is why a continuum of placement alternatives in the school or school system, bolstered by appropriate streaming or ability grouping and meaningful evaluation leading to continuous promotion, is so important.

1540

Keep in mind that the most important dynamic at work here has to do with relationships. The student-teacher relationship and the student-peer relationship are key to the student's positive feelings about self. From those relationships and that good feeling about self come the personal freedom and motivation to engage in active learning, to take the risks, ask the questions, admit you still do not understand and try again to master the mystery.

Streaming, or ability grouping, used wisely within a continuum of placement alternatives at a school or system level, contributes positively to the formation of those relationships. Freedom to pursue those relationships is a student right which must be safeguarded. Streaming, or ability grouping, must serve the student. It can do so at the classroom, school or system level, if it is viewed as a way to individualize instruction, to make an exceptional student feel an integral part of the school and as a recognition of every student's right to form positive relationships with others who nurture spiritual, intellectual, physical or social-emotional growth.

Bright students need the challenge of matching minds with their intellectual peers, but they also need to relate comfortably with other peers. We all readily attest to that. The same truth applies to students who learn more slowly. Permanent

and/or full-time relegation to a group or class or level or school where freedom to seek out and form naturally stimulating relationships is severely limited is to deny a basic right of that student.

Streaming or ability grouping and continuous promotion, used well, will contribute to the formation of the positive relationships basic to human growth and meaningful learning for the student. The flexible, caring environment thus created will help students find within themselves and to reveal to the world the beauty and goodness we know God put there. Thank you.

Dr. Schapira: I am going to address a recommendation which was made by the advisory council. I am not sure how pertinent it is to issues of streaming and such that this committee is looking at, but I will lead into some of those issues after.

The concern of council with regulation 262 was that it was the ministry's intention to delete the definition of a psychological test. That has been done, I might say. Behind that concern were two major considerations. These were expressed by council as follows: Under the recommendations, it was recommended that parental rights to provide consent for individual tests of intelligence and personality be safeguarded by requiring that written permission be obtained and that these assessments be carried out by or under the supervision of psychologists.

In the revision of regulation 262, the right for parents to consent to those tests has been safeguarded, I am happy to say. But the change–and I will not go through the permutations and combinations of that change–we fear has weakened the feeling of obligation on the parts of boards of education to ensure that these tests are administered by or under the supervision of psychologists. I will give you some of the reasons for this position as they were expressed by the Ontario Psychological Association and supported by the Advisory Council on Special Education, by various parent groups, and by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

The reasons for this are that the administration, the evaluation, and the interpretation of tests of intelligence and personality should be part of an integrated assessment process which requires considerable psychological knowledge, skill and judgement. Such procedures are properly performed only by or under the supervision of a legally qualified psychologist.

Psychological tests, when properly used, can make a valuable contribution to the understanding of cognitive abilities and personality factors. However, they may easily be abused and this can have serious consequences for the recipient of the service. Such abuse has been the subject of litigation in the United States, and in some jurisdictions there, it has resulted in the banning or restriction of intelligence testing.

It is our belief that the students of Ontario and their parents expect and are entitled to receive a quality service from boards of education. Tests of intelligence and personality should, therefore, properly be part of a psychological assessment process. It is far better to have less testing than to lower standards for assessment.

Further to that concern, and perhaps a larger one, is the resistance perceived at times by some boards of education to hiring professionals other than teaching staff. It has long been the position of the Advisory Council on Special Education that the complex needs of exceptional children are best understood when professionals from different disciplines, along with parents, participate in the problem-solving process from their different backgrounds and perspectives. In the same way, I think we might best understand the complex questions posed by the need to provide the best educational service to all our students, by putting as many heads together as this committee is doing and looking at those questions from different perspectives.

I am also going to say a few words about grade retention. It was my impression that it was used relatively sparingly in the province by school boards. I am unsure of this, as I have no statistics, but I thought I heard it mentioned earlier that perhaps a couple of boards are using it rather generously. I feel it is a very serious concern that decisions about retaining children are often made without reflecting on the long-term consequences and possible detrimental effects. Research that has been done in this field indicates that, in general, children do not thrive as a result of having been retained. They do not thrive academically, nor in terms of self-esteem nor by other measures.

A recent, long-term research study, reported on at a recent American Psychological Association conference meeting–I do not have the reference, but I am in the middle of doing a computer search for it–indicated that, of the children retained, even those who do make some academic gains tend to drop out at a higher rate later on. They have compared students who perform in exactly the same way academically, some of whom have been retained and others of whom have not, and those who have been retained tend to drop out at a far higher rate.

I think the message is that we should be very cautious about retaining children. The attempt should be made to keep children with their age and grade peers. Sister Frances addressed some of the reasons for that very eloquently. I think there is no question but that schools will need resources, flexibility and imaginative ideas so that all students—whether they display developmental lags or whether they are students with English as a second language or some sociocultural disadvantages or whatever—will be able to be programmed for with their age and grade peers and not be left with that feeling of having been left behind or held back.

1550

Mrs. Walker: I would like now to draw your attention to the recommendations, which begin on page 3 of our report to you, and go briefly through the first three sections. As people involved on the Advisory Council for Special Education who are very concerned about special education, of course, we recommend the following:

Recommendation A1: As persons involved on the special education advisory council, we are very concerned about special education. Our first recommendation is that there continue to be a special education and provincial schools branch of the ministry. I think those of us who work closely with these people hear them talking about children and concerns about children very frequently; it is always most important for us to hear that, both as parent representatives and as teachers and administrators on the council.

Recommendation B1: There was an expansion of council. Several years ago, there were only two parent representatives within the council and it was felt necessary that there be a broader perspective and a broader base of parents. That was well done, and we certainly appreciate that. However, because of the size of council at the present time, the members feel that if there were to be any expansion, there would have to careful consideration before anything like that were done again.

Recommendation B2: One of the things that has happened recently is that there be an orientation seminar for those people who are new and also for those people who are returning to the advisory council. Particularly this year, we went to the Trillium school and had some meetings there. That was really important because it broadened our base in terms of our knowledge and expertise in what is happening out in the province, and that certainly is one of the areas of special education that we are concerned about.

Recommendation C1: Sister Frances has already talked a little bit about this recommendation in terms of providing an enabling environment for our children, so that they can all recognize their potential and the need for a continuum of services. I think you have heard that from many of us, as parent associations, and from the other organizations that have been involved.

Recommendation C2: This recommendation talks about a need for emphasis and increased funding to support the children in the primary years. Certainly, the Premier's speech from the throne in November 1987, almost a year ago, talked about an attempt to ensure that class sizes in primary be reduced to 20, and that is in the process. I think it is really important that where funding is being made available to boards, that it is new money, not money that comes from some other area. That is something we really feel very strongly about.

Recommendation C3: Sister Frances again talked a little bit about this recommendation in terms of student evaluation. We think it is extremely important that exceptional children not be excluded from the evaluation that is being done and proposed. There are recommendations and things that can be done in terms of test-taking for these students, the evaluation in terms of their needs and abilities as exceptional children. It is important that those things be taken into account and also the evaluation reported to parents, so that parents understand where it is that the children stand.

Recommendation C4: As a council, we have discussed many times the concern about appeals and tribunals up to the identification and placement review committee process when there has not been a clear agreement between boards and parents. We feel there is a need for an ongoing process of communication to help resolve some of those differences without going on to the appeal process. That is something we have spent a great deal of time talking about; what way it could be, we are not all exactly convinced of, but there certainly is a need for a lot of communication.

Recommendation C5: As members of council who represent all sorts of exceptional children, we believe that in curriculum guidelines there needs to be some reference made to our exceptional children and their needs and some ideas within those guidelines for creating posi-

tive attitudes towards people with exceptional needs and abilities. I think that is really important. There are ways it is being done in various boards across the province. Certainly, we are all for that and it is very necessary because it helps the self-esteem of those children and also the understanding for our children who will be in the future society.

Recommendation C6: This recommendation talks about the need for speech pathologists and occupational physiotherapists. I think that is something you have heard from a number of us several times. There are just not sufficient speech pathologists and other specialized support personnel throughout the province, particularly in the north. When we take a look, it is the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and individual universities as well that must address that. We will continue to work with them, but I think it is something you could address as well.

Recommendation C7: In terms of the triministerial committee, there are many good and positive things that are coming out of its work and with memo 81, but there is a real need for some support services for those children who have severe social and emotional needs. We feel the ministry should be taking a good, keen look at this and progressing in that area.

Mrs. Nichols: Not very surprisingly, we spent a great deal of our time looking at the special education legislation related to having become fully implemented as of 1985. Inevitably, of course, people were beginning to look at what kind of changes are required, and some of the recommendations that we put forward in this instance will be of interest to you, in particular because in previous sessions you certainly were questioning some of these issues. We recommend:

First, at this time that categories and definitions of exceptionalities be maintained in order to ensure the provision of appropriate programs and services for exceptional students, but that the separate designation of trainable retarded be removed from the current legislation and that legislative changes to enable these pupils to become an integral part of special education be effected as soon as possible;

That designated funding for special education adequately reflect the costs of programs and services to all exceptional pupils;

That the Ministry of Education continue to endorse the valuable contribution of special education advisory committees in school board planning, implementation and review of programs and services; and

That the annual review process, as outlined in regulation 274, be strongly endorsed to ensure the accountability of local school boards for the provision of special education programs and services.

I might add that I am sure the council in this next round is going to be looking at that one, because there is a fair amount of initiative out there among the school boards to dilute that particular direction and that the annual review process not be upheld in the same kind of way. It is not something we have talked about as a council, but certainly the parent associations are all concerned about the fact that we see this as one way of ensuring accountability, and if it changes, it will give the parent associations cause for concern, at least.

Regarding the identification and placement review committee process, we felt that parental access to the IPRC process certainly must be assured and parents must be kept informed and have the opportunity to participate as partners in determining the identification of appropriate placement for their exceptional pupils, and that school boards must be encouraged to offer in-service programs to both parents and educators that will enhance communication skills.

Finally, there is an issue that we certainly spent a great deal of time debating. You will note from the wording of it that perhaps it was one of the ones where consensus was a little difficult. It is that the issue of the appealability of program be resolved. I am sure you will guess from that just exactly where the opinions lay.

Mr. Reycraft: We certainly agree.

Madam Chairman: I think we have reached a consensus, yes.

Dr. Schapira: Recommendations regarding Ontario regulation 262: I have already referred to the one that suggested that parental rights to consent to a test of intelligence and personality be safeguarded and that these be carried out by or under the supervision of a psychologist.

It was also very strongly felt that qualifications in special education be required for teachers responsible for the education of exceptional pupils, as there was some thought given to deleting those requirements.

There was also consensus that corporal punishment be banned and that this statement be placed within the regulation and not under duties of teachers, but where it is clear that no person may use corporal punishment with a pupil.

Regarding needs of students, Sister Frances has already spoken to you about the first recommendation there, that the Ministry of

Education reaffirm the principles of OSIS with regard to the access of exceptional students to the appropriate level of secondary credits, to ensure that exceptional pupils are not automatically steered towards basic-level courses.

It was also suggested that co-operative education programs and/or other work experience programs be expanded to include the more severely handicapped students when it meets their needs. It was our impression on council that these programs were primarily for gifted students and your average students at the time.

We recommend that access to post-secondary education and training for students in basic-level programs continue to be planned for and their needs accommodated appropriately.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education continue to encourage all school boards to offer a full range of placement options to meet the needs within each area of exceptionality.

We recommend that all pupils in French-immersion programs have available to them all the services and resources currently available within the board and that efforts be made to provide these services in both languages of instruction. The Ontario Teachers' Federation has noted its concerns in this matter. A notice did go out to schools to this effect and it apparently has caused a bit of consternation on the part of various boards.

1600

We recommend that French immersion programs not be offered as an alternative for gifted programming. It was felt that some boards were neglecting to offer programs for gifted students and instead were suggesting that they go into French immersion for extra stimulation.

Sister Walton: I will address the recommendations in section H regarding teacher education. The members of the next advisory council would like the opportunity to review the ministry's analysis of the Fullan-Connelly report with a view to formulating a position on any proposed changes in teacher education. We would recommend that there be a systematic supported continuum of teacher education programs from pre-service, induction and apprenticeship programs to in-service programs relating to all exceptional students. The concept of demonstration schools or other models for the trainig of teachers in specific areas of special education should be continued. We understand that demonstration schools as such will probably not be expanded, but certainly that model can provide good in-service for many teachers.

Appropriately trained teacher's assistants can be a valuable asset in the classes and should be made available to help teachers meet the needs of exceptional pupils without altering class size as required by the regulation.

With regard to associate teachers, we recommend that that issue of enhanced recognition and status for associate teachers be reviewed by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

Regarding the prevention of school dropouts, we recommend:

That the support and involvement of parents in their children's education be encouraged, beginning immediately upon the child's entrance to school;

That the process of early identification of potential dropouts be further researched with an emphasis on developing strategies which nurture and sustain positive self-concept in individual learners;

That the hiring of school staff which reflects the ethnic, racial and gender mix of society really should be encouraged in order to provide the range of positive role models;

That the Ministry of Education should continue to devote resources to addressing the dropout issue with particular attention to researching the relationship between having an exceptionality and dropping out of school;

That existing guidance programs at both elementary and secondary levels be enhanced both in content and in delivery, so that they are more sensitive to the needs of and appropriate for all exceptional pupils through better co-ordination with special ed and through a revision of the guidance additional qualification courses to reflect special needs of exceptional pupils and potential dropouts;

That the curriculum review development and implementation process used by school boards include ways to judge the relevance of all general-level courses and ensure that greater attention is paid to the adaptation of curriculum guidelines to recognize the needs of exceptional pupils; and

That alternatives to regular programming be made available to assist students, for example, co-op education projects which ensure the link between the school and business or industry and more apprenticeship programs, semestering, drop-in programs and peer tutoring. The last recommendation has already been commented upon.

Mrs. Nichols: We are available to answer any questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We do have a number of members who have indicated an interest in asking a question. We will start off with Mr. Reycraft.

Mr. Reycraft: I want to thank the advisory council for its presentation this afternoon. I want to address recommendation G1 on page 6, where you talk about the need to ensure access of exceptional students to secondary credits at the appropriate level of difficulty, that those students not be steered toward basic-level courses. Is there any evidence that that is happening now, that exceptional students are being steered into basic-level courses?

Sister Walton: There certainly is evidence of the fact that it works in our school system. For instance, a student with a learning disability probably has good solid average intelligence and maybe above-average intelligence. That student may need a basic English course, but he may not need a basic math and may do very well in a general or even advanced-level math. If we can start that distinction right away, when that student is moving from elementary to secondary, then the teachers see that student in a very different light. The student sees himself in a different light. It is like: "The system is recognizing the strengths my elementary teacher has been telling me I have, but now I can put them to work."

Mrs. Nichols: Further, Mr. Reycraft, to the specific question you asked, yes, there is evidence. In a recent survey the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario has done of parents throughout the province, a significant number indicated that within their board that is the normal practice, that the student after grade 8 is no longer deemed exceptional and that programming is offered at the basic level as an alternative rather than allowing that youngster to take general and advanced-level courses with some support, which is quite appropriate at times.

Generally speaking, the parents who comment to us that way are not suggesting that– It has never been sort of an anti-three-levels-of-difficulty movement, but rather they feel their children should have access to whatever is the appropriate level for the intellectual functioning of the young person and that support be made available. It is a fairly widespread concern throughout the province.

Mr. Reycraft: Can we get a copy of the report that was done by the association for children with learning disabilities? I do not believe we requested that in the past.

Mrs. Nichols: Yes, certainly. I will make sure of that.

Mr. Reycraft: I would like to pick up on something in your response, Eva. You talked about students leaving grade 8 no longer being deemed to be exceptional. Under the special education legislation, does that decision not have to be made by an identification and placement review committee?

Mrs. Nichols: Yes, of course it does, but what happens quite frequently is that in preparation for the review, either at the end of grade 7 or at the end of grade 8, there are many occasions where the parent prior to the IPRC is told that it really would be beneficial for Mary or Johnny or Billy not to be exceptional when he or she enters high school because of the social pressures faced by a student who is designated as exceptional. It is suggested that it would be so much better if the youngsters simply entered all basic-level courses or mostly basic-level courses, that therefore there would be no need for the exceptional label.

Very often parents will contact us. We will not only tell them that they should only agree to that if they feel it is appropriate, but we will at times arrange an advocate to go with them if the parent does not feel comfortable in dealing with that.

Also, the difficulty many parents face is that if they are told, "In our high school, there is no special program, no support system and no resource teacher," they are made to feel sometimes that, "If you choose to have your child continue as exceptional, there isn't going to be any kind of support." The parent may very well feel there is not much point in doing that.

I do not want to give you the impression that this is every board in this province, but there is enough of it that it is certainly one of the things we have spoken to the ministry about many times. There is no question that the Ministry of Education has indicated it is not the appropriate form of service delivery for high school students who have been identified as having a learning disability, but it does not alter the fact that it does happen quite frequently. In fact, there are very few high schools that would have anything like a self-contained program, even for part of the day, for students with learning disabilities.

1610

I think it comes back to the issue of how well educated the parents are about what is happening in the high school. We have commented in a variety of ways to this committee, to the ministry and to many school boards that things like the Parents' Guide to Special Education should cover a great many more issues relating to high

school, so that parents really understand that special education services in the high school system do exist and are very successful with some of the boards.

Mrs. Walker: If I could answer that in terms of gifted children, sometimes in the province when there is no identified program in that area, whether self-contained or part-time, those children are often no longer deemed to be gifted because there is nothing for them. We, of course, tell the parents, and deal with the boards as well, that it is a responsibility. If a child is identified as gifted, there can be differentiation continuing in some way, even if it is not self-contained or in the same mode as at the elementary level. I think this is something we hear in various areas across the province.

Dr. Schapira: Everybody seems to have a comment on this issue. I think this particular point was of most serious concern with regard the learning disabled students. I think there are some boards that are addressing this now and some boards that still do not. I think too, though, that in some cases, students who are slow learners and who have required identification as exceptional, because they have required extra services in a regular grade 8 class or grade 7, are comfortably accommodated in basic-level courses, quite appropriately. Boards are saying, "We need no longer deem those students exceptional." Sometimes, they are quite right, but the major concern does come with the learning disabled and some other exceptionalities.

Mrs. Nichols: Mrs. Cowie would like to make a comment, if she may.

Mrs. Cowie: I just want to make the same comment with regard to a physically disabled child. Very often, they end up steered into the basic-level school because that is the school that has the elevator and the support staff for the student. Often, the student has ability beyond that.

Mr. Reycraft: My general impression of the situation is quite consistent with your answer. I have asked other times for data to support that and I do not think anybody has indicated yet that there is anything to back it up. But it seems to me that if this is happening, there should be a large difference in the number of students we have in Ontario in grade 8 who are identified as being exceptional and the number of students we have in grade 9 who are still identified as being exceptional. Are those numbers available?

Mrs. Nichols: Yes, the Ministry of Education should have them, based on–I cannot remember its title; we all refer to it as the kelly green document. All the school boards were instructed to fill out a series of forms regarding the number of students who are declared exceptional, how they are served and so on. Those statistics exist. They have not, as yet, been shared with council, but we anticipate that at either our October or December meeting we will have them.

As I mentioned, the ACLB figures, which I will provide you with–those are based on the figures the boards have sent into the ministry; we asked our chapters to send us those figures at the same time–certainly indicate that in the majority of boards, the numbers of students who are identified as learning disabled in the secondary panel and in the elementary panel are significantly different, more so than just the fact that there are more children in the elementary panel.

Madam Chairman: Since Mr. Johnston is not here, perhaps I could, on his behalf, ask the ministry if we could have access to that information once it is available.

Mrs. Nichols: Mr. Whittaker is here representing the special education branch. Do you wish to comment?

Mr. Whittaker: We can make it available.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We would very much appreciate that. Actually, I think we have several representatives from the ministry, so you can fight among yourselves as to who provides us with the information.

Mr. Reycraft: Sister Frances was going to respond.

Sister Walton: Just to comment further to that, every September the board's statistical report has an accurate update that would be more recent information, divided elementary and secondary, too, so there are actually two sources of those statistics.

Mr. Reycraft: Can I have some additional time for one question? I will make the preamble as brief as I can.

I appreciate the recommendations you have made about streaming. Many of those who suggest that secondary schools should be destreamed, at least in part, have done so because they have looked at the dropout rates of students in basic-level, general-level and advanced-level courses and have concluded that, obviously, the dropout rates are higher in the lower two streams. They also look at the socioeconomic factors and they draw a conclusion.

The question I want to ask is, if we were to destream grades 9 and 10, would those students who now generally take basic-level courses be

more or less likely to drop out of school without a diploma? What would destreaming the system do to the likelihood that they would stay in school until they graduated?

Mrs. Nichols: I think, just off the top of my head, that a great deal would depend on the content and the teaching style they were receiving. I do not know if you are familiar with the system that some of the larger boards employ, which is the static or nonrotary or limited rotary program in grade 9, which is often available to students with learning disabilities where they study the basic subjects–English, mathematics, science and history–usually within one group. It is a little bit like the grade 7 type of rotary where they do not move around for everything. Certainly, that is very successful, and you could say that is a way of eliminating streaming. On the other hand, in fact, they are grouped in terms of ability and in terms of teaching style.

If you took all the grade 9 students, for example, who have come from a variety of backgrounds, some from special education, some from regular classes and so on, and had them all learn the same material, taught the same way and if they were evaluated in the same way, I would say that the dropout rate, if anything, would increase.

If, however, you could say that you were going to have smaller classes and that the teachers were really able to teach in a variety of ways, and if they were offering individualized evaluation even though they were teaching a group, then I think the retention would be higher, so there are an awful lot of qualifiers on both sides.

Dr. Schapira: I would be hesitant to venture an opinion, really. There are so many factors that contribute to the dropout rate, I really find it hard to predict.

Sister Walton: I will take a shot at it. If you take away streaming, basic, general and advanced, then you have to put something in its place. I think what kids need to keep them in school is the knowledge that somebody in that school setting knows them personally and cares about them and is checking on them regularly. A resource withdrawal program, well run, can do that.

That whole notion of peer ministry, peer tutoring, teacher advocates, all of those kinds of strategies, in isolation, maybe will not turn the tables, but I think if you can establish all of those things as developing an attitude in that student of, "People here know who I am and want me to be here," then the streaming will be unnecessary.

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Mrs. Nichols: If I may just make one further comment in terms of the whole dropout issue, the last time I was before you, I was asked at some length why everybody is focusing so much on the Radwanski report. Last year, council had a presentation from Dr. Alan King of Queen's University talking about who is the dropout. It is my impression that Dr. King has done the longest long-term study in this province in terms of who are the dropouts and so on.

I think one of the very significant things that struck members of council in Dr. King's study was that contrary to what one might expect, even students who drop out actually value education. In a way, I find that a very sad sort of thing. If they said: "Education is not important. Look at the people who have made it in this world without being educated. I will be just like them," one could say they have a reason or a motivation for dropping out. But in fact, he found that the dropouts valued education and recognized that you require to be educated in order to be successful in this society, and in spite of that, they dropped out, thereby saying, "Yes, education is very important, but somehow the education system and I were not on the save wavelength." That really is very sad.

Mr. Reycraft: At that time.

Mrs. Nichols: Yes. I know that some of them, of course, come back if there are programs and so on. Nevertheless, I think it is a very important fact that, presumably, they did not feel what they were learning and how they were being taught were right for them at that time.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. Nichols. We are fast running out of time and we are also running late today. We have two more questioners, Mr. Mahoney and Mrs. O'Neill. Perhaps you could keep the preambles to a minimum.

Mr. Mahoney: Is Mr. Reycraft finished?

Madam Chairman: If you would stay awake, Mr. Mahoney, you would know he is finished.

Mr. Mahoney: It is difficult. The answers have been helpful in keeping me awake. Just kidding.

I just have one question, and Sister Walton, it relates to your presentation. You said that when kids are identified as learning disabled through the identification and placement review committee process, or whatever identification process but specifically that, that it is not labelling. I think I am paraphrasing but fairly close to what you said; it is not labelling for organizational

reasons to benefit the system, the educators or the board, but rather to identify the specific needs of the children involved and find ways to help them.

I wish that were totally true. I am concerned that it is not totally true, not that you are speaking a mistruth, by any means, but that I just feel there are boards around the province that will identify kids to put them in integrated settings in specific areas of small classes because they have to put them there, because that is where the teachers are, as opposed to designing a program around an integrated system that would allow those students to maintain their self-esteem, to maintain their relationships with their colleagues and their families, and to go to school in their own community and not be bused many, many miles to another community because that is where the teacher is.

I have been having some difficulty in the last six or seven weeks with a number of presenters, revolving around the learning-disabled child, who still seem to be saying, "Let's put that label on him." I wonder, as advocates for the learning disabled, why you would not be taking the position of saying: "Let's get that label off them. Let's identify their problem, specifically."

As you pointed out, they may have a learning disability in reading, but be brilliant in math or some other area, and therefore, let's give them the remedial help or the special attention in class within the mainstream of an integrated program to work on their specific problem. We are still segregating, in my view, for single-subject and single-area learning disabilities. We are still putting kids in small classes of seven and eight children in a class and busing them out of their communities. I think that is purely for organizational reasons and not for the benefit of that child.

I do not know if you have any comment or if you could perhaps give me a response why advocacy groups continue to promote the identification of the whole child as opposed to the identification of a specific problem, as being a learning-disabled kid rather than a kid with a specific learning disability.

Mr. Reycraft: I thought my preamble was long.

Mr. Mahoney: That is all I have, though, Doug.

Sister Walton: I think advocacy groups tend to do that because they do not want to lose what they have worked so hard to gain. the services that have been put in place as a result of the legislation. The label then gives that child access to those services.

What you are talking about, and what I really believe, is that you need to have a multitude of flexible supports in place so that it is not just the one class that can handle that child, that the community school, the neighbourhood school says: "This is our child and we want to go to bat for that child. We want to keep that child in our school and we are going to do this and this and this. System, we want you to help us because if you will do this and this for us, then we will do this for the child."

I think a school board has a responsibility to be responsive to develop that attitude, first of all, in its principals and in its teachers, that those kids have a right to be in their neighbourhood school. We have a responsibility as educators to look after them. When that attitude has been developed, then the support structures are created because people feel committed to keeping that child and to doing what is best for that child.

Mr. Mahoney: Just by way of a final supplementary, do you not start that process by changing the mindset away from him or her as a learning-disabled kid to him or her as a kid with a learning disability? I am not playing semantics. I mean that in its simplest terms.

Sister Walton: That is right. Kids with special needs are more like other kids than they are different. That is really important for teachers to believe. We tend, as teachers, to look at what is wrong because we feel a commitment to cure it, to remediate it. Instead, we have to start looking at what the child can do and build on that.

Mr. Mahoney: To live with it.

Sister Walton: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: It is very hard to confine ourselves because you cover such a wide area and most of these recommendations are so fundamental. I would like to go to section E, however, if I have to confine myself, where you talk about parental access to identification and placement review committees. This is the phrase, I guess, I would most like you to comment on, "That parents be kept informed and have the opportunity to participate as partners in determining the identification." I would like you to say a bit more about "participate as partners," because I think that is one of the key elements in how we are serving students and how parents feel about how we are serving students.

I have one very brief question after that. That is just a yes or no. Could you speak to parents as partners in this IPRC process.

Mrs. Nichols: I guess I would like to start out by saying that although it would seem obvious

that it was only the parent association representatives who would see this as very important, in fact it is one of the areas where we did have consensus. Had there been a vote, I think it would have been a unanimous vote. I think we are all very aware that parents must be encouraged to be partners in the education of their children.

In terms of the specific concerns, there still are a number of boards around this province that contact parents at the very last minute about the IPRC, whose letter very clearly indicates that, really, they would just as soon you did not turn up and whose information is not made available ahead of the meeting.

We sometimes joke, but it really is not a joke, about what it feels like to go into a room where there is a table behind which sit a large number of professionals. If it is not actually a kindergarten-size chair that is on the other side for you, it sometimes feels that way, especially because we know that of course it is not like that everywhere. There are boards where the parent really is made to feel that what he has to say is important and that he is part of the decision-making process.

We wanted to emphasize that the model exists. We do not have to invent a model because it exists in many places, but it should be adopted everywhere. I know there are going to be people who will say: "Yes, but some parents do not know what the education system can offer. They perhaps do not understand the assessment," and so on. Our answer to that is, "But there are ways of educating parents." Certainly, all the parent associations we are involved with accept that it is part of our duty, but it is also part of the school system's duty to make sure that parents have an opportunity to be educated. We are not suggesting courses in how to be a good identification and placement review committee member but rather ensuring that parents know there is a parent association in their community so that if they do not know how to prepare for an IPRC, they can go there.

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Many of our associations, for example, actually have kits on how you prepare for an IPRC: What are the questions you should ask the psychologist? How do you ascertain whether this placement is appropriate for your child? They are very basic things, but if the parents do not know we exist, and if we do not know that Mrs. Jones is just going for a first IPRC, then those things will not connect. What we really would like to see is the Ministry of Education perhaps being a little more forceful in saying to boards: "Hey, this can work because it's working in some places. Make it work in your jurisdiction."

Mrs. O'Neill: So it is a truly co-operative approach.

Mrs. Nichols: Exactly.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is F2, "that qualifications in special education be required for teachers...." still a problem?

Mrs. Nichols: No, it is not. The revision of regulation 262 did leave section 20–I believe it was section 20–relating to the qualification of teachers, as it was. The proposed changes created such a major problem out there in the community that I think that has been cancelled. I do not think anybody was in favour of it except perhaps the person who wrote the original version. I think that concern is past now, but it is something we have to be aware of in terms of the ongoing in-service. If there are going to be many more teachers who will see exceptional students in the regular classroom, then the knowledge of how to work with exceptional students will have to be much more widespread than just those who are special education teachers.

Mrs. O'Neill: I just wondered why you did not include it. This is my very last one, Madam Chairman, on I3, "that the hiring of school staff which reflects the ethnic, racial and gender mix of society...." In the last year I have visited quite a few schools, schools where there were many exceptionalities. I have yet to see a teacher with an exceptionality teaching even in the schools that are totally full of students with exceptionalities. I wondered why you didn't include that; of all the groups that would present to the minister, why you would not somehow fit that into your recommendation?

Mr. Reycraft: I always considered myself learning disabled.

Mrs. Nichols: I do not know. Why did we not?

Mrs. O'Neill: You may want to think about that because the parents of the students in those schools have a feeling that that is not even considered when there are job opportunities. They would like role models for their children.

Mrs. Nichols: That is a very good comment. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the advisory council for its usual excellent presentation and dialogue. Thank you for coming.

Mrs. Nichols: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Our next presenter will be Hazel Gontier. If you could come forward, please. Hello, Mrs. Gontier. Welcome to our committee. We apologize for the delay. We are running late today and hope it did not inconvenience you too much.

HAZEL GONTIER

Mrs. Gontier: I am Hazel Gontier. I am the author of Happiness Is Learning: The Azel Method, and Reform in Education from A to Z in Public Schools from Kindergarten to Grade 6. I taught for nine years in a senior kindergarten in North York.

I want to commend the Ontario government for reducing class size in primary grades. The classroom teacher understands best the capabilities of her students. Reducing class size at all levels would make it possible for the classroom teachers to act as monitors and mentors, as suggested by George Radwanski. He also suggested supplying remedial and tutoring services. Standardized testing for diagnostic purposes would identify those who need help.

I commend the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation on its suggestions regarding grades 9 and 10 for skills testing. I would further recommend skills testing or learning assessments be done at the end of levels such as grade 3 and grade 6, with no one passing to the next level unless he has acquired all the skills of the previous level, with as much time given as needed to complete the level. The testing would be set by the Ontario Ministry of Education with the help of experienced educators.

I agree with Radwanski that we should get rid of streaming, homogeneous grouping, spiral curriculum and social promotion, which are only excuses for not teaching some students. There I may sound like Sheila Morrison.

Since we must finance learning assessments, remedial and tutoring services and reduced class size, we must think of ways and means to redirect money from unnecessary expenditures to those which are necessary to help produce students who can continue to learn and apply their knowledge and skills.

I speak chiefly about primary grades because my experience was with primary children.

1. Eliminate mechanical aids to teaching, such as televisions, calculators and computers, until the basics of communication skills, that is, reading, writing and numbers, have been mastered. Children will be introduced to these mechanical aids in their homes and shopping plazas. They will be better prepared to use them after they have acquired the basic skills.

2. Replace three teachers' aides by one certified teacher to reduce the class sizes. Teachers' aides can return to volunteer work in libraries, gyms, audio-visual rooms, activity and games rooms, or lunchroom supervision in the schools.

3. With 30 per cent of our students in many classes requiring assistance with English as a second language, ESL, return the certified teachers who are teaching ESL classes to the regular classrooms to reduce the class size. Then give all the teachers-in-training and teachers who are retraining training in teaching English as a second language. With greater freedom to interact with smaller classes, children will learn to use language from each other and from the teacher.

4. Abolish professional development days because of the inconvenience to parents. Fully trained teachers learn more by teaching and listening to pupils, than by listening to other teachers.

5. Give back the task of decision-making to the classroom teacher by returning as many consultants, guidance teachers and resource teachers as possible to the classroom.

6. Cease buying unnecessary textbooks, teachers' manuals and workbooks. Reading and writing can best be taught by both the phonetic and sight method using words from the child's own experience as he or she discovers them. Use experience charts for reading aloud together to avoid individual embarrassment. In arithmetic, more attention should be given to memorization of the facts and applying arithmetic skills to solving problems from the child's own experience.

7. Continue to return as many special education pupils as possible and the special education teachers to the regular classrooms to reduce class size. Give all the teachers training which has been helpful to special education teachers, especially in ways to restore the confidence, the self-worth and the desire to learn in pupils.

8. Help children acquire communication skills by encouraging talking, asking questions and listening to answers. There should be no talking unless it is pertinent to the subject during teaching time or when the teachers are giving instruction or information.

9. Encourage pupils to attend the school closest to their home to reduce the cost of busing and to give pupils much-needed exercise. I am really sometimes overwhelmed at the amount of

money we are spending on busing when children do not learn very much from the bus.

10. Allow teachers to handle all minor behavioural problems with the assistance of their students. Most students accept peer discipline with less hostility than teacher discipline. Severe behavioural problems should be referred to parents, medical doctors and health nurses. The teachers need all their time for teaching and listening to students.

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I now decry the use and expense of the psychological services paid for by our tax dollars. More harm is done by the power of suggestion which they impart to our teachers and parents about their students because it is more often negative than positive. Often, without establishing good communication with the student, they interview and assess wrongly, to the detriment of the student, teacher and parent relationship.

Proof of this could be obtained by interviewing teachers who have made referrals to psychologists, and the students and parents of students who have been referred.

Further proof of this can be found in two books I obtained from the North York library, written by Americans who gather statistics on education in schools in the United States. One is the Myth of the Hyperactive Child and Other Means of Child Control by Peter Schrag and Diane Divoky. The second one is the Literacy Hoax by Paul Copperman, 1978-80.

Mental problems caused by home conditions should be handled by social workers whose services are paid for by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

There is need for improved teacher training and improved methods of teaching. Recently it has been a well-publicized fact that although we are spending billions on education, our efforts result in higher numbers of functionally illiterate people–1.6 million in Ontario. We have educators setting goals but not giving teachers the method of achieving these goals.

1. Look to the teachers themselves to solve the problems of teaching. Give teachers the freedom to teach and learn from their pupils or any source where they may find ways that seem right according to their own experiences.

I have given my suggestions for improved teaching in primary grades in the book I published myself in 1978, Happiness is Learning. On page 108 are my guidelines for teachers:

"1. Listen to pupils and observe what the quiet ones are doing. Allow them to do things they suggest as long as they are not harmful to themselves or others.

"2. Plan lessons one day in advance taking the suggestions for the desire to learn from the top pupil in each subject.

"3. Check all work submitted and correct errors or have them corrected and recopied. Display work well done or to the best of a pupil's ability. Check off accomplishments on a desk or wall chart."

From page 5 of my book, I quote:

"1. I planned my lessons the day before by observing what was needed. Then I taught to the most advanced pupil in every subject while I insisted on the whole class obeying the rule that they must not interfere with the learning of others. Then I retired to a fixed location to act as a consultant while I left the pupils to interact, to motivate and to help each other."

"2. Improve teacher training by recognizing them as professional educators. As Robert Nixon said in 1975, "A preferable alternative would seek to structure a more compatible partnership between teachers and school boards by legally establishing teaching as a self-governing profession."

"3. Then teach them all the successful methods we know to give their students the academic skills and the ability to use them, while we are developing teachers who can use their knowledge to solve the problems of teaching. This in turn will produce students who graduate with the necessary skills and the ability to apply them to solve the problems of the future."

Let me quote from the Reader's Digest, Why American Education is Failing, condensed from Our Children's Crippled Future by Frank E. Armbruster:

"Outside the school environment one normally has to produce to be promoted; much work must be explicit, meticulous and correct every time. It is important to be well informed and logical. To let students believe otherwise is to mislead them dangerously–especially if they are underprivileged."

In the 1985 annual report, Schools with Special Needs, prepared by Ted Gould, a consultant, and R. Marner, assistant superintendent in North York, all the financial and educational resources of the North York board, including assistance from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, were concentrated on the special needs schools from 1980 to 1984. On page 8 of the report it says:

"In October 1984, standardized achievement tests in reading and mathematics, plus the North

York self-concept inventory, were administered to students in grades 3 and 6. Comparable testing had been done in 1981. Grade 3 academic scores are virtually the same as in 1981. Grade 6 academic scores are lower than in 1981. Self-concept scores increased at both grade levels."

Further in the report, under the title Special Needs Program Update, they expressed the need to raise study skills levels by establishing study skills centres.

Let me introduce you to the great educator, L. Ron Hubbard, who says:

"The end and goal of any society as it addresses the problem of education is to raise the ability, the initiative and the cultural level, and with all these the survival level, of that society. And when a society forgets one of these things, it is destroying itself by its own educational mediums."

This is in a brochure entitled the Hubbard Method of Education.

From the works of L. Ron Hubbard comes the Learning Book. I would like to have given you all a copy, but it costs $15, so I only submitted one copy.

Mr. Ballinger: He must be a very rich man.

Mrs. Gontier: He is dead.

Mr. Ballinger: He is doubly rich.

Mrs. Gontier: He founded a great deal of knowledge. I think we should be aware of his educational knowledge.

As stated in his brochure, "The purpose of the Learning Book is to make study more fun while improving students' abilities to read, understand and apply what they are studying." L. Ron Hubbard has discovered a technology for study that is used in many private schools throughout the world.

In the pamphlet Social Co-ordination in Africa it says, "Education Alive is the group licensed by Social Co-ordination International (SoCo) to deliver L. Ron Hubbard's study and communication technologies in South Africa." I quote, "In the last year, over one million people have started and completed a paid service with Education Alive."

This study technology has been translated into many languages, including Chinese. Thousands of his books containing his study technology are being used in the Orient.

No longer need we graduate functionally illiterate young people. We can increase their ability and potential to handle all the new information in this technological age.

As written by Frank Washington in the Oklahoma Eagle on January 1, 1987:

"'The Hubbard method of learning has the potential of improving the reading scores of all our youths,' says Centennial principal Henry Jefferson. 'I feel that it is time for public school education to explore any avenues to rectify the reading deficit of our young people.'"

By applying the information I have given you, I am sure we could reduce the dropout rate. In fact, I think that is the answer to your dropout rate.

The first thing we should do is increase the autonomy of the teachers and let them discover in any way they find correct for them a better way to teach children. I hope my book will be an example to teachers who want to teach children individually, according to their needs. That is what I was very happy to find out when I was teaching. Through teaching that way, you can increase the potential of the students, as Lloyd Dennis would like to see happen.

The standardized testing that Radwanski recommends is going to supply you with the students who need the remedial help. Then you need improved teacher training. There you should consult all the knowledge of teaching, that is, study technology. If you have it in your private, alternative and public schools or any school, it should be given to the teachers in training. Then they would be ready.

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The Learning Book is something I would really recommend in order for teachers to understand the barriers to study. There are three barriers to study. One of them is misunderstood words, another is lack of mass on the subject and the other one is too steep a gradient. This is printed for students who can read. If you know what the barriers to study are and know the special way through them, then you can get through the barriers to study and continue to study.

I would like to read some of these barriers to study and the symptoms. "Do you feel blank? Are you sleepy or like you don't want to study any more? Do you feel washed out or not there or sort of nervous and upset?" I think that must be something that is bothering me.

"Do you dislike what you are studying? Are you complaining and blaming others?" Sometimes, I do that. "Can't you use what you studied? You find the word you did not understand and look it up and you will find those symptoms will disappear." I have had that happen to me. "Do you feel squashed or bored or like you are not getting anywhere?" And the diagrams are there. "Do you feel bent or spinny

or dizzy or sort of dead? Are you getting headaches or a funny feeling in your stomach? Do your eyes hurt? Do you feel like this? In that case, get some mass on your subject." By that, get the real thing or make a model of the thing of clay or get a picture or something, so you know what the mass of that subject is and then you will get rid of the symptoms.

"Do you feel confused?" Go back to where you were last doing well and do that again. Do it until you have it and you will really get through it. Have fun learning lots of new things."

I feel the application of this knowledge would greatly reduce the dropout rate in our schools. You can do a lot of social, spiritual and psychological healing, as Irene Atkinson, a trustee, calls it, by having pupils listen to each others' stories. There will be fewer misunderstandings if they learn to read and write their own stories.

Madam Chairman: I want to mention to you there are about five minutes left and you might like to reserve that for members' questions.

Mrs. Gontier: All right. That is about all that I have to say. There are two private schools; they can give you the statistics on their success. One is Ability School in Mississauga and the other is Education Alive on the Danforth. I can leave the addresses with you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I would mention for members' information that we do have copies of both books Mrs. Gontier has mentioned, The Learning Book by Mr. Hubbard and also her own book, Happiness is Learning. If you would like to look at them after the committee meetings today, they are up at the front with the chairman.

Mr. Keyes: I would be glad to look at them, maybe not today but before we finalize our work.

I am sure, Mrs. Gontier, there must be a few hundred young people around the province who are happy to have spent some time with you in those senior kindergarten years in North York.

I have two questions I want to zero in on today. You talked about teacher training. While it is not so much a part of our course, you did suggest doing away with professional development days and learning more from the children. Would you perhaps give some credence to the fact that just as children learn from their peers, quite often teachers can learn a great deal from their peers as well in the concept of a master teacher. To me, professional development days are a time when we should be sharing among teachers the good training and the exceptional interest and talents some teachers have with others. You seem to decry a bit teachers trying to benefit from one another and say teachers will learn more from their students. I think two different types of learning go on that way.

Mrs. Gontier: Yes, that is true. I know I did say here in my book that I learned a great deal from my peer group in the school where I was teaching. But because of the inconvenience to parents and also because teachers do learn more from their pupils, if they study their pupils and watch them very closely, they can see what they need to learn.

If you would like an example, my grandson is four. My husband gave him a basket of chestnuts. We were sitting in the living room before the fireplace on Thanksgiving Day. He wanted to make something with the chestnuts. I wanted to lay them out in groups of 10 for counting by 10s. I said, "Let's see if we can find out how many chestnuts you have."

He was over here making a shape with his chestnuts across from me, and I was trying to put them in 10s. He just grabbed my chestnuts like this. My daughter, Jane, was sitting watching and she said, "He wants to make the number four." I said: "That's right. He is trying to lay the chestnuts down to make the number four." I am trying to teach him to count by 10s. He is not ready for that, but he is ready to learn how to make the number four. I failed to see it. But I am not with him as a teacher or even as a grandmother, only occasionally. His mother saw it. That is where he is at, not where I wanted him to be. You see? And that is how you learn from children.

Mr. Keyes: In the area of your work in kindergartens, how did you go about being trained and skilled to recognize those students who are having problems even at that early age? I am referring now to the early childhood identification project that has been going on in the ministry in order to provide classroom teachers with the skills to recognize those students who potentially are going to experience difficulty.

Mrs. Gontier: As a classroom teacher, I observed the child. I gave him self-worth as soon as he came in. I accepted his capability, whatever it was. I had one child who was backward, with an artificial arm. Right away, I introduced her to the class and asked her to tell us about her problems. She did. Then we accepted her and I let her progress at her own speed.

I had a child who was almost blind. I kept him in my kindergarten. He could get close up to the screen and see the letters and learn even faster than most of them.

I did have to refer them to a psychologist in order to get them special help in grade 1. But I did keep one child–in fact, two different children who the pyschologist said would never learn. I kept the one child a second year in my kindergarten all day. He did learn. I have since seen him and he was up to grade 6, but just being taken out for a little assistance.

The psychologist said he would never get past grade 1. There was a girl about whom they said the same thing. She would never get past grade 1. I assisted her. In fact, she was an abused child and, therefore, very frightened of everyone. It took me a long time before she finally gained my confidence and I was able to work with her. She was confident enough that I would help her. She also went on. The last I heard of her, she was in grade 6, being taken out occasionly.

I do see that there are still some people–in fact, the remedial work has to be done by finding the misunderstood words and the lack of math. There is too steep a gradient. Once that is solved, you can put them back into the classroom again and they will continue.

Mr. Keyes: Would you just explain what you mean by the too steep a gradient? Are you referring to the level of skills required in a math area? Just what are you referring to?

Mrs. Gontier: It could be math. It could be doing something or it could be learning to read. There are steps in every learning situation. You learn this step and then you skip over and get into this third step, which happens to a lot of children who are travelling and going from different schools. They miss a step, a gradient. Then you are going to find that step is too difficult. You just cannot do it. Everything is in confusion. You do not understand where you are at all. I have had the feeling myself of being in confusion because someone tried to get me to do something I was not quite ready for. So you have to go back to where he was doing well, and at the end of where he was doing well, that is where you start.

1700

Mr. Keyes: You would support, I presume then, the ministry's move towards trying to provide some benchmark type of assessment of a student's abilities at the end of the division levels?

Mrs. Gontier: Oh, definitely, that has to be done. Then you can do your remedial work. That is the only way you can find out where they need assistance.

Mr. Keyes: I just think there is a slight difference between what Radwanski is recommending in those skill-testing areas and standardized tests versus what the ministry plans to do in order to provide some guidance to school boards to see more or less where they range on the spectrum of knowledge and skills that have been gained by their students.

Mrs. Gontier: I would think at the end of grade 3, at the end of grade 6 and then at grades 8 and 9 are very good levels to do your remedial work. Therefore, you would have to sort of group them that way and allow every child as much time as he needed, but please do not let him out of that or he is never going to get out of it if someone does not help him and give him that remedial help.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you very much. There are many other questions, but in the interests of time, thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Keyes, and thank you very much, Mrs. Gontier, for your interest in our committee and for presenting to us today.

Mrs. Gontier: Thank you for having me. I hope I did not go on too steep a gradient.

Mr. Keyes: I will only know that once I read your two books. That will be weekend reading for me.

Madam Chairman: We are used to steep gradients in this business.

Mrs. Gontier: I could give this other copy to someone if you would like to have it.

Mr. Keyes: We have a good resource here.

Madam Chairman: We will make sure it is passed around to the members.

We are pleased to welcome as our next presentation the Ontario Association of the Deaf.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

Ms. Taylor: Good afternoon, members of the select committee, and thank you very much for allowing us to come here. It is a real honour to be able to speak to you this afternoon. My name is Norma Jean Taylor, and this is Gary Malkowski, both of us from the Ontario Association of the Deaf Educational Task Force Committee.

OAD is a deaf consumer organization founded in 1886, so we are now 102 years old. It is a volunteer organization with a goal to preserve American sign language as the natural and first language of deaf individuals.

I would also like to introduce Sheila Johnston, who will be the interpreter this afternoon and just briefly inform you that her role will be to pass information back and forth between the two of us. She will not be editing information. For any

questions you have, please address us in the first person.

We would like at this point to present some of our concerns on education of deaf children in Ontario. These concerns are raised not only from ourselves but from the deaf community at large across Ontario. Remember that we are former deaf children ourselves and went through the system, know what it is like and know what it feels like to grow up in that system. We would like to present the deaf perspective at this time.

With mainstreaming, we know that Bill 82 was passed for disabled children to be promoted within an integrated system in the regular educational system, and that is something we do indeed support. However, when we are looking at disabled groups, there is a variety, from physically disabled to learning disabled and so on, and that also would include deaf individuals. However, deaf children often have very different needs because they are not dealing with a language based on sound. A deaf child is born without the use of sound and, therefore, much of the experience which is picked up through sound-based languages is lost.

For other disabled children who do use a language based on sound, that is a very different situation. A deaf child has a very different communication system. It is not based on a world of sound but on one of vision. Therefore, when they are placed into a school system, often their academic level is very different because the language base is so different, and that is a grave concern for us.

Also, Bill 82 certainly seems to work for other disabled children. However, when a deaf child goes into a regular classroom setting, the teacher stands at the front, but all of the information does not come directly from the teacher and all of the information and discussion that occurs around the child is often missed because the child cannot pick that up. Instead, he has to depend on things visually, so information is lost at a great level; in fact, only minimal information is often picked up.

It is a great stress on the child because the child is very different to other hearing children, often cannot communicate with them and there is a great deal of frustration and often anger. Self-esteem problems occur. Not only at a young age, but as they continue to grow, they feel uncomfortable with their own deafness.

There is, as well, a lack of support within the system. Role models are lacking, and by that I mean older deaf individuals whom they can look up to and emulate. There are often only one or two deaf children in the whole school system. Therefore, they do not have that peer support and they do not have that role model. There are no deaf professionals within the mainstream of school whom they can emulate.

The communication experience within the mainstream is very frustrating—much more so than possibly you can imagine or think it is. If the child wants to be involved in extracurricular activities, wants to participate fully in things such as sports, drama and school parliament, all of those areas include the occurrence of a great deal of discussion and communication. Therefore, with a communication problem, regardless of the fact that the child tries to keep up, he becomes lost and often is considered an interference. The other children often get fed up with him and, therefore, the child becomes very passive and gives up in trying to participate fully in the school system.

This continues throughout the system, and often a feeling of rejection occurs. The child does not feel like a whole person. He begins to look at himself and label himself as deaf first, not as a whole person. That is a real problem. It all stems from the communication problem that exists. Without a sign language environment within the mainstream school, we see grave difficulties. That, again, is a problem we want to identify.

All of these issues I am touching on are real concerns. They often stem from the fact that there is not a sign language environment, there are not support systems and there are not peer and role models in place in the mainstream, and all of these we have to look at.

At this point, I would like to ask Garry to present just a taste of some of the experiences faced by a child in both the mainstream and provincial school system.

Mr. Malkowski: I remembering going into a mainstream class. There were hearing students all around me. I was the only deaf person in the class. Of course, they were all speaking English. I tried to use what hearing I had and figure out what the teacher was saying. I remember one time they were in social studies class. They were talking about the federal election, and questions began all over.

What you have just experienced is a point I would like to make. You missed a lot of the information I was giving. That is what happens to a child in a mainstream experience. What the child is required to rely on is information being given through a vocal language. However, the child has to depend on his vision to ascertain what is being said in the spoken language.

To continue with that experience, I remember being in the classroom and missing stuff. Afterwards, at break or lunchtime, we would all go to the cafeteria. You know all the gossip that goes on at lunch, but I missed that. They used to make fun of my speech, make fun of the fact that I was deaf. They used to tease me and try to test my hearing, to see if I could see where the sound was coming from. I was never really part of the group.

I tried to talk to people, but they did not have a lot of patience with my communications skills. I felt really rejected. I know my self-esteem was awfully low. I did not want to be deaf. I always wished I could be hearing. I used to deny that I was deaf and say, "Oh, no. I am hard of hearing; I am not deaf." They knew that was not really true. There was an awful lot of frustration. The negative reaction I received from the students certainly influenced my life greatly. It encouraged me to try harder to be a hearing person and not be deaf. There was a real lack of peer support. I did not have anybody I could talk to. I was experiencing a lot of frustrations, but there was nobody else who was like me. I seemed to be the only one. That experience did not change; it continued.

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I missed a lot of experience, a lot of knowledge of the outside world. I did not catch on to the gossip, the things that kids talk about, what is going on the world. I did not get any of that information. The communication system at home was not really that much different from at school because my parents are hearing, too, so of course the experience of communications difficulties often persisted. At the dinner table, my parents would talk about all kinds of activities of the day, and when I would ask them what was going on, they would say: "Wait until after dinner. Why don't you go and watch TV? I'll explain it to you later." I wanted to talk about my frustrations, but I could not talk to anybody at school, either. It was a depressing experience.

When my parents got home, they were tired, and I guess they did not have a lot of time sometimes, but that was a really difficult experience for me. I always wanted to find somebody who could talk to me with the same method and in the same manner I use, but it was missing in the school system.

I did not really enjoy full participation in the school system because sports and student parliament required a lot of discussion at school. I always missed so much; the hearing students could not be bothered putting up with me. I remember trying to join the basketball team once, but it was important to identify the plays and I would get mixed up and, of course, whenever there was a problem, it was blamed on my communication. If it had been an all-deaf team, I think I would have been able to understand things better.

There were a lot of rap sessions occurring after school, but I missed a lot of that because the students would not talk to me about it. That really affected my self-esteem. I had a lot of negative feelings.

There were no role models for me to look up to. I never saw an older deaf person, actually. That was something I really missed. I thought I could not become a teacher or a counsellor. I had never seen a deaf professional. I did not know what I would have to do. I figured I would probably have to end up in a low-paying job because of my hearing limitations.

Some of the problems I have just outlined are things that occurred in the mainstream program. Now I would like to talk about the provincial school. I remember being in the provincial school. It was a great environment. I never missed anything; there was lots of sign language all over the place. If I missed what the teacher said, at least I had peers I could talk to and who would fill me in on what I had missed.

After class, it was great. We would all get together and decide what to do at night, go over to each other's house or room. There were a lot of activities after school. It was a great experience for me. We would often get together and discuss our homework or do some quizzes when we were practising for tests. In the mainstream setting, of course, there were a lot of difficulties in trying to get extra help on specific subjects. However, in the schools for the deaf, it was great. I was able to participate fully.

Of course, I got a lot of information in the classroom, because everything is going on in sign language and I could understand what everybody was saying. I learned from a lot of deaf peers, as well. Also, there were deaf adults in the school system I could ask about how they had learned to deal with coping in the hearing world. They told me to be proud of what I was, to be proud I was deaf and how to identify my communication needs, how to tell people to slow down or how to ask people to write if I had missed things. I learned how to use an interpreter there, too. That helped improve my communication skills and made me a more effective communicator.

I learned a lot more about deafness, too, and about deaf culture, which of course includes American sign language, the values that are placed within the community such as the value of sight and hands, the heritage of deaf individuals and a lot of the history. We learned to be proud of ourselves and I still carry those values with me.

I also learned a lot more about my own self-esteem and developed a very positive self-attitude. I can communicate a lot better, not only with deaf individuals but with the hearing world, my own family. I know the difference between the hearing culture and the deaf culture and the different behaviours in both worlds. I know sometimes deaf people are very blunt and to the point and hearing people sometimes tend to beat around the bush a bit before they come to the point, but I know how to deal with those two things.

I know that if deaf people are at a table, people will complain, "You have to be quiet." We sometimes did not know about that, but I learned to find out what was polite in the hearing world and the appropriate way to act. Nobody was afraid to talk to me about different rules of behaviour. It was important to be able to be aware of what it was like to be deaf and what it was like to be hearing and what the rules are that govern both individual's behaviours.

I think it is important, again, to have the provincial schools, because they provide that sign language environment, as well as the appropriate support services. The deaf school is like a part of our culture. It is where the community network begins and it is a support system for us. Without the provincial schools, it would be a tragic loss, and it would be a very destructive process for young deaf children on emotional, physical and language development, because it is such a strong part of the deaf community.

With the eyes of the world right now on the Ontario educational system, I think that is very important. I think that we continue to look at the difference between mainstreaming in provincial schools, and if sign language and support services are not available in the mainstream program, we have to realize that it greatly affects our self-esteem.

Knowledge of the deaf community and network on not only a local level but a national level is missing within a mainstream school. Maybe you are aware that the deaf educational review committee has been established following a private member's bill. Of course, that is going to look at improving a variety of areas such as hiring more deaf instructors as role models to increase self-esteem, because that will encourage deaf children to learn and to feel good about themselves.

We would like to see improvements in the teacher training program for teachers of the deaf to include orientation to deafness and cultural sensitivity training, because most teachers of the deaf tend to focus a lot on the hearing loss, auditory training and oral training. However, what is missing is information on deafness and the deaf community, and I think that information is desperately needed to be added. It is important also for parents of deaf children to receive appropriate information so that they can make the appropriate choices for the training of their children. It is important for us to have those provincial schools for the deaf, to have sign language environments and appropriate support services to meet the needs of deaf children, both communication needs and the needs for self-development.

With the limited number of interpreters that are around, the limited role models in the system and the lack of a sign language environment, not to mention the fact there are no appropriate support services, these are very serious results that we see occurring from Bill 82. It is important for you to recognize that there are different needs between disabled children in general and deaf children.

I would like to thank you at this point for listening to our point of view as deaf adults.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I assume you are now ready to field questions from the members.

Mr. Malkowski: That would be fine. Yes, please do.

Madam Chairman: I am very pleased to hear that out of Mr. Johnston's private member's bill, the deaf educational review committee did come forward. We hope it is going to address some of the very basic needs you have identified throughout the last few years. Our committee has had a number of presentations by the hearing-impaired, so I think we have become somewhat sensitized to the issue and we welcome this opportunity to talk with you today. We will start the questioning with Mr. Keyes.

Mr. Keyes: First of all, I want to congratulate both of you for attending and, in particular, to congratulate Sheila Johnston on the interpreting work. I do not think I have seen anyone interpret more rapidly and effectively than she has been doing today.

Because we have had presentations before from the hearing-impaired, I would like you to make some comments to us as to how you see the balance between oral and sign language. One of our other major presentations was the plea to be sure that we did keep deaf children in regular schools and that much more emphasis was placed on the oral aspect. You have taken the other side, so perhaps you could give us some of the balance between the amount of oral language time that should be spent with the deaf, as well as sign language.

Mr. Malkowski: First of all, our position, of course, is to support the deaf child to have equal opportunity, to have exposure to both languages, a language of sound and a sign language environment. I think it is very fair for the child to have as much information as possible on an equal basis.

The problem right now is, historically, parents of deaf children have not received adequate information. What has been missing all along is that there has not been a lot of information related to sign language, the deaf community and its perspective. Most information is given by audiologists and professionals, speech pathologists and so on, who tend to put a lot of heavy emphasis on hearing loss, residual hearing, exposure to sound. That is fine. We have no problem with that and we support that concept. What is missing is that we do not have information provided to parents on a sign language environment.

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I think if parents became more aware of that information, they would be able to make wise decisions for their children. Often they are making decisions without realizing the difference between provincial schools or sign language and an oral approach. I think that is something that has to be developed. But I want to emphasize that we really support that a deaf child should have both sign language and exposure to language that is sound-based. It should be on an equal basis.

Mr. Keyes: Following up from that, would you suggest that it should still be done in provincial schools? Rather than the majority of instruction being through sign language, there should be an equal balance between sign and oral language, but within the framework of a provincial school, and not attempt to do it in the regular elementary schools of the province.

Mr. Malkowski: I do not think the issue is just mainstreaming in schools for the deaf. What is important is providing appropriate sign-language environment and an environment with sound to meet the needs of the deaf child, to meet the communication needs.

Mr. Keyes: I think she has another question.

Mrs. Taylor: Yes, and also, just in addition to that, that language development is such a critical thing for a deaf child and it has to be begun at a very early age because without a language base, how can you get off to a good start in any academic subjects, as well as social and emotional development, and that is what we are really pushing.

Mr. Keyes: I guess I feel, though, that in the provincial schools your teachers are trained in advance to be sign language teachers and primarily, they have all been people who have do hearing ability, so the oral aspect is a natural one for them. But if you are trying to train teachers of a regular system to deal with the problems of the deaf, then there is a much more extensive training that has to go on with those teachers. That is my concern, trying to equip the majority of teachers in our elementary schools with the capacity to do their teaching in both oral and sign language.

Mr. Malkowski: I think one of the things we would like to point out in relation to teachers of the deaf is that the training is not adequate and that they do not train them to become sign language teachers. In fact, sign language is often learned from the deaf children themselves.

Therefore, the majority of teachers in the mainstream school are not getting appropriate training from Belleville, or wherever they are receiving their training. It is important that they become aware of the needs of the deaf children. But I really want to point out again the teacher of the deaf training is again going to be reviewed by the educational review committee on education of the deaf, so we are hoping to see improvements in that area.

Mr. Keyes: And a final question. Have you had an opportunity to study other jurisdictions outside of Ontario, where the deaf community consider that they have had better alternatives than have been presented in this province?

Mr. Malkowski: Yes, we have. In Alberta, one of the best educational systems exist, which provides equal education on both a sound and sign language. I think that I already actually presented that information in my brief. I have the statistics and numbers of the different schools and the role models included. The teacher training program is at the University of Alberta in

that province. They have the Western Specialization on Deafness, which includes various deaf professionals, as well as hearing professionals, and they provide a high-quality program. It is a faculty of education program.

However, in Ontario we do not have it at a university level. That is again something to be pointed out. In Canada it seems that it is a land of minorities. In fact, there is a lot of sensitivity to various heritage languages and yet, we are not getting the same sensitivity. I would like to see the model of deaf education that actually occurs in Sweden, where they have a complete sign language and spoken language program and they are given on an equal basis, so that the deaf child receives all information and understands how to deal with the information given to him in both languages. That helps develop them socially and emotionally. I think we can look at Sweden as a real model for deaf education.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: I would very much like to thank the Ontario Association of the Deaf. By the way, before you go, there was one clarification I was wondering if you could provide for me. One of your brochures has "Ontario Association of the Deaf" on the front. The other has "Ontario Association for the Deaf."

Mr. Malkowski: That was a printing error. It is the Ontario Association of the Deaf, because we work with, not for, deaf people.

Madam Chairman: I wondered if maybe there was some psychological reason for the change, but it was just one of those infamous typos that keep cropping up in life.

Ms. Taylor: Yes, I am afraid that is what it was.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for clarifying that. We very much appreciate your contribution to our committee today. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Malkowski: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: For members' information, I would just mention that following Ken Dryden's presentation tomorrow morning and members' questions, we will be having a meeting of the steering committee. That will be immediately following the Dryden presentation.

Interjection.

The clerk has just reminded me that prior to going to the steering committee, we will have some procedural items for the full committee. I urge members to make note of that so that they will be here tomorrow morning for that discussion.

Mrs. O'Neill: Would you give us an idea of the time frame of that, because some of us have lunch obligations, and I am not talking about going for lunch.

Madam Chairman: I believe Mr. Dryden was given the same time frame as Mr. Radwanski and Mr. Dennis, which was an hour and a half.

Mrs. O'Neill: So we are talking 10 to 11:30.

Madam Chairman: That is right. It is possible we may finish earlier. At that time, we will have the procedural matters discussed and, from there, we can go into the subcommittee. I would think that, for regular committee members, we might be through around noon, but that is simply a guess at this stage.

DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

Mrs. Vrieze: I am part of the presentation to speak for the Deaf Children's Society of Ontario. It is a very short presentation. We are the parents of the deaf children, and we just want to expand a little on what OAD said. They are the adults, and we represent the children. If you could bear with us for three minutes, we could give you our position.

Madam Chairman: Certainly. We would be happy to give you that opportunity.

Mrs. Vrieze: My name is Jeri Vrieze and, as I say, I am speaking for the Deaf Children's Society of Ontario, an organization that has been in existence for 30 years.

For far too many years, the deaf school system for Ontario has been a starting place for children who have failed in the oralist programs. With this very poor beginning, our children have fallen further and further behind. I want you to know our children are not dumb. It is the system that has failed them.

Children need language from birth. The most critical time in your life for language acquisition is from birth until five. All other children come to school with a complete language system intact. They have a vocabulary of thousands of words. They understand grammar and syntax. But our children are coming to school at age five with no language. Every day, I see children starting, frustrated. They lie on the floor and kick and scream and bite. They are oralist failures. They do not even know their names.

In comparison, I see a child coming from a rich, total-communication program, starting school as his hearing peers would. Their imaginations are alive and well, let me tell you, living in Ontario. The other day I asked my

five-year-old, signing deaf child, "Who made this mess of sugar all over the seat of the car?" And she looked at me and she said: "A robber broke the window, climbed through the window, sprinkled sugar all over the seat and left, Mommy. Really, that is what happened." And then she went skipping off while green alligators chased her.

1730

Take that child, from a rich, signing environment and compare her to the child, the oralist failure, screaming on the floor. Sign language has allowed us to be a family in every sense and share all the wonders of childhood. There is a religious saying that God never closes one door without opening another door, and let me tell you, sign language has opened the door and opens the door for us every day of our lives.

We come here today not to dump our children on the school system, but to ask for your help in giving them a grade-level education through high school. As parents of deaf children, we really would welcome the opportunity to share the responsibility of educating our kids, but we want to be involved on the decision-making level and in the planning. We want to be included when goals and objectives are set. Everyone is quick to say, "Oh, a child failed because the parents were not involved," but if we want to share responsibly, we need to be included at every level.

While we support the residential schools, as you just heard, we do not believe they should be the only option. We strongly believe in special–not mainstreaming but special–local schools for the deaf. Children need the support, encouragement and love of their family on a daily basis to succeed academically and as whole people, and we would like this option: local academic schools for the deaf must be developed right through high school.

While we support mainstreaming for all other handicaps, for many profoundly deaf children, the most appropriate educational setting has to be an environment where they can understand and be understood, and that is a signing environment that includes them as equals rather than an environment that continually points out their differences and isolates them.

We really believe the educational system would fall right into place and work perfectly if four things were done:

1. Teachers' training should require that teachers of the deaf become fluent signers in sign language. Now, it is an option.

There are no standards, no testing and no upgrading. If a French immersion teacher came and could not speak French, you would not even let her apply for the job, let alone teach a class, and that is what happening to deaf children. They have teachers who are not fluent in signing.

2. We need early help. As I said, other children start school with language. What we are given now is a home-visiting teacher, once a week, who does not even know sign language. The most critical time to get language is from birth to five. We cannot wait until our children go into the school system. They have to become fluent right away, and we need this help.

3. At diagnosis at the hospitals, we need total communication and oralism to be presented to the parents as equally viable options of education. Now we are told at all the hospitals: "Choose oralism first, and if your child fails, they can always go to TC." I tell you, our children are not failures and I do not want them to continue to be seen as failures. If you wait until they are five, you have missed the most critically important time of their lives to develop language and they will never get it back. So you cannot say, "Try oralism first and if they fail, we will try TC." Let the parents decide. I am for equal options. Give them straight answers and then let the parents decide. Do not say, "Pick one first."

4 Our children desperately need deaf role models in the education system. They need deaf teachers, deaf principals, deaf administrators, just to say to them: "You can do it. You can be a success. You do not have to be a janitor. You can be a principal. You can be a teacher. You can have a master's degree, a PhD. You can do anything you want." But they have to see it to really believe it.

Right now I know deaf teachers with master's degrees in education, fluent in sign, who have been rejected in favour of inexperienced hearing teachers, and the outstanding criteria is only because they are hearing. You pick a teacher with a bachelor of education over a teacher with a master's.

The last point is that our children are excluded from extracurricular activities because of a lack of transportation, a lack of signing instructors, and because there are no interpreter services for kids; none. Our children need a normal childhood with dancing classes and team sports and art and drama. Our children could be Olympic champions, too, and artists, if they had the same accessibility that these enriching experiences are giving to hearing children.

In conclusion, I believe that with parental involvement at a decision-making level, with mandatory fluency for teachers in sign, with deaf

role models on every level, and with early sign language for the family and accessibility to enriching extracurricular activities, all our children would succeed academically. The whole system would just fall into place.

As Victor Hugo said: "What matters the deafness of the ear, if the mind hears?"

Madam Chairman: I think one thing we have learned in this committee, among the many concerning the hearing-impaired, is that the methods for early identification have improved drastically over the last few years. I think it was Voice for Hearing Impaired Children that told us there was a three-week old baby at the Hospital for Sick Children who had been fitted with a hearing aid.

It was just, I thought, utterly incredible that they could identify it at that age. Perhaps that is the prelude to what you are saying, that if the child is going to benefit in those formative years, it has to be identified as early as possible; I do not know.

I saw statistics here with the brief presented by the Ontario Association of the Deaf which indicated that from spring 1979, when there were 1,800 hearing-impaired children, 72.9 per cent of them being severe or profound, that changed in 1987 to 2,216 hearing-impaired children, 57.9 per cent of them being severe or profound with no measurable hearing. That seems to me to indicate that there is far more early identification. They may be the children who are on the borderline who before could not advance in education simply because nobody understood what their problem was, and that they found it was related to a hearing impairment.

Mrs. Vrieze: I have no trouble with identifying the hearing problem. The Hospital for Sick Children is excellent at finding hearing problems. My problem is that the information that helps you choose the method in which you will educate your child starts right there. Parents are not given full information. They are given the voice-oral way and told to pick that first, and that then if the children fail, they can go to signing.

I am saying, give them all the facts about the benefits of signing. Our total communication philosophy includes a balance of both auditory-verbal and sign. We have both. We have both to offer, but you must let the parents know so they can make a decision. That is the problem. It is happening even today, as I speak. I am sure parents are not being told that such a thing as total communication could be beneficial for their child, and how. That is what we would like. I have a lot of faith that parents would make the right decision if they had all the facts.

Madam Chairman: They certainly cannot make that informed decision unless they do have the facts.

Mrs. Vrieze: All the facts.

Madam Chairman: Certainly, that is one thing that you have brought to our attention that I think will benefit members personally when they are studying this issue.

Mr. Reycraft: I want to better understand why it is parents do not get all of the facts. Is it a policy decision of a hospital? Is it a particular view of a doctor?

Mr. Bailey: Until recently, in actual fact, it was a policy decision of the hospital; I guess I could say a de facto policy. For instance, there was only one program presented. That was the oral program at the Hospital for Sick Children, and to a degree, at other hospitals. What has happened is they now have a total communication teacher.

I think it is important to understand that when you talk about total communication, it is total communication. It includes oral and it includes sign. This is the balance that was spoken of earlier by Mrs. Vrieze and by Mr. Malkowski, that these things will help the child develop intellectually.

Even if they do get a good diagnosis at, say, one year, which is a pretty good age, if they do not get into the right program, given the diagnosis, because there are subtleties involved here, then they will lose those very important one to four years. After four and five, their language development cuts off drastically. It is twice as hard to learn language after those years. That is why it is very critical that the right decision be made at the right time.

Mr. Reycraft: I guess I still do not fully understand, though, why a five-year-old would end up in a school unable to communicate in any way. I assume it is because his parents have never been made aware of the total communication method.

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Mr. Bailey: In actual fact, my personal experience is exactly that. I am living with a mistake of the education system. We have worked very hard over the past nine years to recover from that. When my daughter was four and a half years old, she could not ask for one single thing from a U-shaped kitchen and that is when we switched to total communication. We

had never heard of it. It was just accidental at that time.

Mr. Reycraft: Were you in contact with the school system in her first four and a half years?

Mr. Bailey: She started school at two years of age, as soon as we felt she could go all day. We did not have the problem of acceptance of the deafness. You get that. We were just totally ignorant. We did not have the information. Had we had the information, I am sure we would have gone for the total communication approach. We worked on the oral approach.

If you can imagine yourself not having any language at all, trying to learn Russian or some language that was totally different without hearing, you can understand the magnitude of the problem. It is true that some of these children do not know their names. They cannot ask for the simplest things and the example I used–my daughter was four and a half. I did not even know what she wanted. She could not ask for it. She was pointing and she ran to her room, crying. We happened to run into somebody who knew about total communication at that time and then a whole new world was opened up, but it was with the handicap that you have missed five years.

A lot of parents now are doing it out of ignorance. Add to that that it is the easy choice. You do not have to accept deafness if your child takes the oral approach. You can tell yourself, "My kid is 100 per cent like me." That is not necessarily true. It is the choice that hearing parents can more easily accept. If they do not get the full picture, then naturally they are going to go further into that, and a lot of them end up then coming into the school system at five years of age, or six, or later. You can get some horror stories that come in in their early teens. That does not happen any more, thank goodness, but it is not that recent history.

Does that give you a feeling for what we are after here?

Mrs. Vrieze: You are told that if you work hard enough in the oral method, your child will talk. Statistics are that 95 per cent of them will not. So why put all your eggs in this very flimsy basket when you have a basket that will hold 95 per cent of them? There are no statistics that say the child will not talk if he can, because he will. It helps. You can say, "My daughter can say mama." The only way she learned was when I said, " M and A," and pointed to mommy, to my face, saying "Ma," and then she understood: "Oh, you want me to say that. Okay, I understand what that means. Now I can say it."

Mr. Bailey: To give you an example, if you have ever seen the story of the miracle worker and how that deaf and blind child at the well finally understood and the light turned on, this is the type of thing we would like to start earlier on and get that. Of course, in that story, she was a teenager but that is, in essence, what you deal with. My daughter did not know what a question was until she was about eight. A question was something totally alien. That was at eight years of age.

Mrs. Vrieze: And yet my child has had total communication from a one-year-old diagnosis. Green alligators chase her to school and robbers go through the window and sprinkle sugar. Her imagination! She can ask questions. She knows who she is and where she lives. She is engaged to her boy-friend who is five.

Mr. Bailey: These are not isolated examples. We want to stress that they are not isolated, the examples we have used with our children; there are many others.

Madam Chairman: Do you see the situation improving within the last, say, five years?

Mr. Bailey: To a degree, but there are a lot of children falling through the cracks, as things improve slowly. It is too late for my child; it is not too late for hers. She got it right, but I know there are others we meet who are two or three and we say: "Look, you have a couple of years left. Do the right thing." But you know that passing conversation does not make up for the recommendation of an expert in a proper setting.

Madam Chairman: That is why you are here, because every time you communicate it, there is an opportunity for some other parent to find out something he or she otherwise would never have learned.

Mr. Bailey: Exactly.

Madam Chairman: We very much appreciate that you did take the time to come and talk to us today. As I say, I think all of us have a better understanding after this set of committee hearings as to what the difficulties of the hearing-impaired are. Hopefully, many of them will be rectified over the next month, and hopefully also, the deaf education review committee will not only be a good gesture on the part of the ministry but will also actually function and change some of the things we would like to see changed. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Bailey: Thank you for your time.

Mr. Keyes: I am just wondering if the parents are represented on that committee.

Mrs. Vrieze: We would very much like to be.

Mr. Keyes: Can anyone answer that?

Mr. Bailey: That has not been confirmed yet. We think we are, but it has not been confirmed.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for bringing that up, Mr. Keyes.

The committee adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

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From the Ministry of Education:
Whittaker, Keith, Education Officer, Special Education and Provincial Schools Branch

Individual Presentation:
Gontier, Hazel

From the Ontario Association of the Deaf:
Taylor, Norma Jean, Education Task Force
Malkowski, Gary, Chairperson, Education Task Force
Johnston, Sheila, Interpreter

From the Deaf Children's Society of Ontario:
Vrieze, Jeri
Bailey, Ron

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Hansard
Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Organization of the Education Process



First Session, 34th Parliament
Thursday, October 13, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, October 13, 1988

The committee met at 10:13 a.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I recognize a quorum, so we will open this session of the select committee on education as we continue our review of the organization of the education process in Ontario.

We are very pleased to have as our presenter today Ken Dryden, whom many of you will remember not only for his feats outside of the educational realm but also because of the inroads he made as youth commissioner. Welcome to the committee, Mr. Dryden.

I would mention for Hansard that Mr. Dryden is here specifically at the committee's invitation, since many of the members had expressed a desire to discuss some of his educational proposals with him.

Please begin whenever you are ready.

KEN DRYDEN

Mr. Dryden: Thank you for issuing the invitation. I am sure later on we will go into questioning that goes into a lot of different areas, but I do have some preliminary comments.

You have been hearing presentations for some time now. I have been reading many of the news reports that highlight this recommendation or that, and I am sure that, as you go about your deliberations, you will surely have a difficult time sorting out what your final report will be. But as you do, I would hope that you would spend some of your time discussing the process, not just the substance, because in many ways—and I will go into that in more detail later—I think the real problem of achieving change in education is mostly one of process.

A little while ago I was talking to someone who is very prominent in the area of education. We were talking about some of these things and I was making some comments. After I had, he asked whether I thought the problem was one of ideas or whether it was one of implementation. I was not really ready for the question, and I am afraid I did not have much of an answer at the time, but it started me thinking. I guess if he were here now and I were to try to answer his question now, I would say that I think the problem is much more one of implementation than it is one of ideas, and I would say that the experience of the last year or so, the reports that have come out and their aftermath, would reflect well that particular point.

As Ontario's youth commissioner for more than two years, I dealt with unemployed youth and programs to assist them. Many young people were unemployed for economic and social reasons largely beyond their control, but many had exacerbated their problems, dropping out of school in numbers that I found surprising and greatly alarming.

I had also come to sense the centrality of education in today's world. It seemed a crucial thread common to many of our most pressing issues: economic issues of competition, productivity and growth; social issues of equity and opportunity; at once a source of their problem and of their solution. So in my final report as youth commissioner, I decided to deal not only with unemployment but also with education and the dropout as well.

I read several education studies and reports, but two made a profound impression on me: A Nation at Risk, released in 1983, the work of a commission established by the United States Secretary of Education; and A Nation Prepared, a 1986 report from the Carnegie Forum's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. Neither offered much that was new. Both were supported by evidence and opinion long in the public domain.

Faced with big-picture complications of priority and choice, task force members and staff pieced together education's myriad, often confusing fragments into a coherent whole. They looked at an imagined future and offered an educational vision of how to meet its needs: not a universally accepted vision, not one easy to implement, nor one done with the step-by-step detail of an architect's blueprint, yet something useful, serving to focus the enormous public interest in and concern about education; creating a reference point for its discussion and debate, and in that way encouraging action.

The commissions did other things as well. They were made up of people of varied interests

and backgrounds, some from education, but others from business, government and labour. Some were just respected citizens and some were just wise elder statesmen. The atmosphere was challenging and demanding. Playing to an audience of peers, knee-jerk professional views were simply not good enough. Educators and others were forced to think through things they too long considered self-evident. The result: some surprising positions and far more than a lowest-common-denominator consensus.

Moreover, by focusing on the future, the commissions allowed people to see past differences to discover a degree of consensus few thought existed. They suggested the scope of change, the real possibilities which the passing of time can bring. In doing so, they brought home to the members and staff, public and politicians, the importance of what they were doing and the opportunities it presented.

The reports were deliberately brief; both were less than 120 pages. They were intended not for academics and bureaucrats but for a wide public audience. Their language was concise and clear. In format and style, they resembled things that got read, not filed.

They needed to get read. Each task force, consciously or not, understood the education problem the same way. Much research had been done; the need was for implementation and action, much less for new ideas. They believed that the present and future demanded more than incremental change. They believed that, left on their own, governmental structures cope far better with incremental change. Anything more means complications–fiscal, structural, personal–that can be disruptive, unpleasant and difficult to live with. These complications test a government's will and, without clear public support, are hard to overcome.

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But the public, without a reference point to focus debate, seemed determinedly fragmented. To take on the task, governments needed to receive a message: The education problem is urgent; there is a way to address it–where there is a way, there is often a will–and considerable public support for the try. The process needed to involve the public. The reports had to be readable and also read. Media interest needed to be generated and sustained. There had to be follow-up once the reports were released.

After years on the sidelines, education had to become a political issue. There needed to be enough public interest in education for schools to see incentives to get better and for school boards, communities and state governments to see the same: "Our school, our community, our state does a better job preparing your young people for the future. Their future will be brighter here. It is here you want to live."

This is a process that offers no comfort. No new national structures are created. There is no national plan able to be orchestrated and implemented. The realities of jurisdiction make it so. Instead, the process must be slower, more informal, more grass-roots in approach. The authority of task force members and staff comes only from the merits and force of their argument. They must trust that if they get it right, others will agree with them and come to think about many things the same way; and if they do, their actions and the decisions they take will change, and slowly, the education system with it.

Have these two reports succeeded? They have been useful, but it is too soon to say more than that. Some schools and school boards have acted. Certain states have taken important steps. Education has become a major political issue in some areas. There is yet a much longer way to go. Will they succeed? I do not know. I do feel they are central to a process more promising than any other.

That is why I propose a commission on education and youth in Canada.

The challenge of education remains what it always was: how to prepare young people to live and work in the future. But society has changed and is changing. True of any time, there is evidence and a pervasive, unquiet feeling that this time is different. In the workplace, new technologies and internationalization have created increased opportunity and vulnerability and a greater urgency to act. Time has speeded up. Structures, processes and people have had to adapt and become more flexible.

Off the job, there are more single-parent and two-working-parent households. There is less time and support for a child to grow up; greater pressure, by default, on the schools. The old securities–family, job, community–have become less secure and certain. If security is anywhere for society and for the individual, it is in their capacity to meet challenge, to work hard and work smart in a rapidly changing world.

The question: How must the education system change to meet the needs of the future?

There are signs in the present that all is not well. About one third of our young people do not graduate even from high school. Colleges, universities and employers have discovered that many who do graduate lack basic writing and oral

communication skills. Recently, questioning what we always took as self-evident, we have tested for literacy and uncovered an unimaginable truth.

What should elementary and secondary education provide? Who is it for? Is it intended to prepare young people, as many as possible, for further formal education? Or is it for everybody, those who go on to college or university and the great majority who, year after year, do not and will not? If the future means change and change means the need and ability to learn new things, what does this mean for the education system? We hear often about the need for lifelong learning, but what is it? Is it a specific skill, something you can teach as you teach reading or algebra, or is it a process?

For a student, is it trying to learn, practising and putting in time? Is it learning enough to be able to learn more, enough to feel that you can learn? Is it experiencing success and feeling good about yourself? Is it having the confidence to spend the time and energy necessary to try? And if it is all of these things, if it is a process, what does that mean for those who fail now? What is their future?

What can be done about it? Why are our universities and colleges filled mostly with middle- and upper-class students? Why does a disadvantaged start so often mean a disadvantaged future? Why have our elementary and secondary schools not done more to improve the picture? Is it their goal to provide students equal access or equal opportunity? Do we too often confuse the two? How can we do better?

The education problem has to do with meeting present needs for all students and setting a course for the future we foresee. Young people entering grade 2 this fall will graduate from high school, we hope, in the year 2000. What should they have learned by then? Should it be basic skills, whatever that means, or more specific ones? Is school, first and foremost, a preparation for work, or is it something else? What do employers and educators think? What does the community think? If philosophical differences exist, what about practical ones? How different is the employer's image of a well-prepared student from that held by an educator?

These questions need answers. Too often we have put off real answers merely by saying yes to the pressure of new needs as they arise. But every "yes" has its price: in more money spent, more curriculum time taken or, more usually, in other things sliced thinner. Examined in isolation, a strong case can and likely will be made for many new proposals, a case that is hard to resist. A commission on education has the mandate and obligation to put each new proposal into a bigger educational context, to weigh cost and time against need and feasibility, to set priorities, to make choices. What should elementary and secondary schools be doing? What can they reasonably do? And if they do that, just as important, what can they not do?

Community values also must be examined. Most would say, I think, that education is and should be a high priority, but how high? How much money? What percentage of our government budgets are we willing to spend on education? How many hours a day and days in a year are we willing to see our children in the classroom? How much homework will we, as parents and students, accept? What quality of result do we expect and demand?

Part-time jobs have proliferated in recent years, and students, needing to fill up their nonschool hours, have filled many of them. Summer jobs have become an expectation–perhaps, therefore, a need–for those in the midteen years and older and their parents. But what impact, good and bad, do outside jobs have on schooling? Is this contemporary style of life consistent with our expectations for education? Implicitly, what choices have been made? Are they desirable choices? In any case, are they alterable? In certain tests, young people in certain societies and from certain cultural groups tend to score higher. Why? What priority do their parents hold for education? How is that manifest in the lifestyles of their children? As a community, are our priorities for education the right ones now and for the future? If not, what can do we do about that?

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The main resource in any education system, of course, is the teacher. Determining priorities and curriculum and generating community support set an educational context and its environment. It is up to the teacher to give them life and make them work. The challenge for the system is to give them that chance, to give good teachers the opportunity to be good teachers. It is how well that challenge is met that will determine our future educational success.

Good teachers must be attracted into and stay in teaching. They need to be properly trained and prepared. They must also be able to do the job expected of them. That implies many things, but in essence it means there must be some sort of balance between educational goals and expectations, on the one side, and curriculum, direction,

responsibility, opportunity, incentive, methodology, time, money, human nature, working conditions, standards and facilities–in other words, the means to achieve them–on the other. Too often, there exists no such match. The result is that a dissatisfied public, looking for the most obvious scapegoat, makes teachers its target. The teachers, in turn, become defensive, point fingers back and protect their turf, and few improvements are made.

A precise match between goals and means may be too much to hope for, but something closer in balance is important. It means the onus can be put and can stay where the onus belongs, creating for teachers, officials and politicians in the community the kind of environment of constructive tension needed to achieve results.

Most of the time, in most areas, only minor change is necessary. Those in authority are called upon simply to manage, needing to do a little more and a little better here and there to do their jobs. But occasionally, not often, something more substantial is required, something that demands more than management, something that requires leadership.

To exercise that leadership, those in authority need to send out strong, consistent and persistent messages, but they cannot and will not do so unless they are confident of what those messages should be. To me, this is the price we pay for our public and political confusion over education.

In Alice in Wonderland there is an exchange between Alice and Cheshire-Puss. Alice says, "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" Cheshire-Puss replies, "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to." It is good advice. Canadians and Ontarians, I think, need a reference point to focus the interest in education that is already there, to give energy and excitement to an issue that needs both, to look ahead and see where we are going and where we want to get to, to be a starting point. To me, that is why a commission on education and youth is important.

I just have a few comments in summary.

1. Education for economic, social and psychological reasons should be a major public and political priority.

2. There exists a basic public dissatisfaction with the present system as it relates to both present and future needs.

3. Change that is more than a little of this and a little of that is needed.

4. Quality of education must become a political issue, not just the side issue of education.

5. Quality of education has not been a political issue, largely because no party has a confident vision of what the school system should look like.

6. Canadians and Ontarians need an educational reference point to focus debate and generate needed action.

7. The Radwanski report offers a useful agglomeration of ideas, but has few political coattails. The report and its aftermath make clear that the main obstacle to educational change is not one of ideas but of implementation. the process by which one examines the educational system, therefore, is crucial. The Radwanski process was faulty.

8. Priority should be given to elementary and secondary education.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. We will now move to members' questions and start off with Mr. Jackson, followed by Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you very much for being here. I wonder if I might start off by just putting on the record and putting in context the impact of some of your work, in particular, your report. When were you appointed to be Ontario's first youth commissioner?

Mr. Dryden: I think it was in May 1985.

Mr. Jackson: Were you appointed?

Mr. Dryden: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: How long was your term?

Mr. Dryden: It was two years. I was in the position about two and a half years, I think.

Mr. Jackson: That was the end of the term, and it was not renewed.

Mr. Dryden: That's right.

Mr. Jackson: There has not been another youth commissioner.

Mr. Dryden: No.

Mr. Jackson: So you are the one and only youth commissioner we have had.

Mr. Dryden: Right.

Mr. Jackson: What were the original terms of reference? What was the genesis of your appointment–not you in particular; that is well known–but what political response, in your opinion or your understanding, was the reason for the creation of that position?

Mr. Dryden: I guess at the time–and I have a hard time remembering precisely–certainly, the recession had passed its deepest point but was still very strongly felt. Unemployment rates were very high. As is always the case, the youth rate

was about double what the adult rate was, so as the adult rate got to double figures, the youth rate was extremely high. I guess I was appointed to do something that would necessarily focus on the youth unemployment problem.

Mr. Jackson: So you approached it from that perspective. At what point did you realize that many of the solutions lie in the way in which we structure our school system or in the impact of the educational experience and its preparedness? Education was not the central issue of the reason.

Mr. Dryden: That is right.

Mr. Jackson: I am trying to get this across and on the record in terms of setting in context the evolution of what I think is one of the most valid reports on youth in this province. It did not happen by accident. It occurred through part of what you came to realize. I think it would be important that you put on the record some of your feelings about your experience in terms of what you were called on by politicians to look at and what you soon came to realize was a sense of vision that was missing and required.

Mr. Dryden: The first thing that do when you are appointed to a position like that, if it is not the first thing you do before you are appointed, is to get some idea of what the problem is and what tools you have to try to deal with it.

I took the job to do something about youth unemployment. That is what I thought I could do with the tools I had. It became evident very quickly that, in fact, we could use all the tools we had, spend all the money we had, change the programs to a certain extent, make them as effective and as efficient as we could and, in the end, we could provide something for about 10 per cent of those who were unemployed at the time. That was a very bad day when that became clear to me.

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So I just started looking around and then said: "If I understand my job has something to do with youth unemployment, but if I see that the tools that are there seem only to deal with a portion of those who are unemployed, then what else can we do, if nothing else than delivering a message of that, of trying to get other informal partners or, as it turned out, of taking a look at who were disproportionately unemployed and how they might individually put themselves in a better position, put themselves closer to the front of the job queue and so, individually, be better off out of it?"

As I have mentioned briefly in my report, probably the biggest shock that I got in the whole time that I was youth commissioner—and it was a job of many shocks—was looking at the education figures and realizing that the dropout rate out of grade 12 was somewhere around a third, checking and rechecking it and assuming I must have missed something, going back and getting further data and finding out that, in fact, no, that really was the case. Then I realized that in many ways it was I who simply had missed something all those years, and that if I had been much sharper and much more perceptive, if I had thought back 20 years or so to Etobicoke Collegiate, where I was in high school, I would have remembered that in grade 9 the classes went up to 9L and in grade 13, it was 13E, but it was taking me 20 years to make the connection.

Then it was a question of, what can we do in this sort of area? We decided that, as I would go around and talk to various service clubs and others around the province, I would also go into the high schools. I would talk to kids there and be part of assemblies that they would have to try to get all of this across to those kids that this was the case, that these were the employment rates. There seemed to be a disproportionate connection between the rate of unemployment and the level of schooling attained and, therefore, what you were doing was extremely important to your own futures, whether you knew that or not; and that you should realize that where you are and what you are doing is more important than anything else at this particular time, just to know that. If there is a moment that becomes difficult for you in the next couple of years and you consider dropping out, just put that in the back of your mind, and maybe it will make you take pause and consider things a second time.

I did that for about a year and a half and I kept enjoying it less, and I was not sure why I was enjoying it less. We had a little skit, and it seemed to work kind of okay, but I was enjoying it less and less. Finally, I began to realize that I was feeling that way because, even if it was the right advice, there was something quite false to it as well. As I looked out as those kids, I knew that whether or not I said that, basically, a third were going to drop out anyway. Even if they gave pause and even if they thought about it a second time, it was not really the giving of pause and thinking about it a second time that was going to make the difference.

The difference is your circumstances at that particular time. If things have not been going very well, if you have felt yourself falling behind since you got into high school; if you feel as if you are not getting very much out of it; if you feel

as if you are putting in time, you are not getting very much out of that kind of experience. Whether you pause or not, chances are when that 16th birthday comes along, you are going to leave.

Yes, it was the right advice, but no, it was a kind of lie as well. I could not handle it any more. Finally, I just stopped doing those. It was almost at the time that I finished anyway, but I think that was part of it.

In terms of the final report, I knew that I wanted to write one. There was no obligation, no expectation of a final report, but I wanted a crack at it. I wanted to try to get down what I had been experiencing and feeling and hoped that there was some validity to it. I wanted to spend at least some time on the dropout. It turned out, I guess, that about a third of the final report was on the dropout and about 90 per cent of any coverage that came in the press had to do with the dropout. Basically, the discussion about unemployment was kind of passed over and any focus had to do with the school part of it.

To bring that to its final conclusion–I mean the report, in some ways–I must say that a couple of months later, when the government had a speech from the throne, I got some pleasure out of that. It seemed to me, as I read it–and I do not know whether I would feel the same way if I read it today–there was very little that was concrete in that speech from the throne except the part that said we would commit ourselves to cutting the dropout rate by one third in a period of five years.

Others, either in the government or associated with it, thought in some ways that would be something that, given my recommendations, I would be very unhappy with. In fact, I was very happy with that. I thought the way in which that was done made a huge practical and psychological difference. To me, it meant that if the words had been less precise, if the targets were less precise, what almost assuredly would have happened is that the task would have gone to some people within the ministries; they would have looked at it and said to themselves before anyone had to say anything to them, "It is too complicated."

It will require an expenditure that is larger than I can imagine anyone willing to make. It will require peoples' changing how they do things more than they are comfortable doing. The fiscal, the personal, the institutional change required by this kind of thing is simply too much. It is too complicated. I cannot imagine the process would accept all of this. While I am charged with doing better in the whole thing, I will do better within the context that I think the system will accept, which is the little bit of this and the little bit of that. Defensibly, things will improve; we will be able to point to the fact that they have improved.

Basically, it will be essentially the same five years down the line, 10 years down the line or whatever, but by putting the specific target on it and whether the jobs get performed in that way or not, it suddenly becomes the job of the person looking at it to put down something so that at the end of the day, it is somebody's responsibility to ask: "What result will come from that? Will we get to a third in five years?" If the answer is no, then what else, how else, anything better, anything more?

The whole approach to a problem starts to change. Instead of saying, "Why, we really cannot do all of these things," the approach becomes: "How do we do it? How can we deliver on that very specific promise?" I have not kept up to date in terms of how things are going. I know there is an awful lot of activity, but I think the activity came from the fact that the specificity of the promise. I was very pleased with that.

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Mr. Jackson: My colleague Mr. Johnston is going to talk to you specifically about statistics and where we are three years after that throne speech. You yourself, in your report, cautioned extensively about the bits and pieces approach. I do not think it is appropriate for me as an opposition member to suggest that the government's approach has been faulty. I strongly believe it has, but I usually confine those remarks to estimates and the news media and my mirror at home. I have some very strong feelings about the specific challenge of your report, because it set a more long-term path. It talked about rearranging the way we look at education, how we have an identifiable missing link in the education-to-work continuum. When you break up the processes of opportunity and advancement, people will break them up in their minds and create problems and breakups. The transitions are poor.

Yet what you have referred to, and I did not wish to raise the throne speech, but given that you have, was basically a political statement. We have seen some dollars allocated to school boards. My school board got almost $50,000 to have a teacher leave a classroom to start head counting. I am telling you, that is not an oversimplification of what that person's job is; that is a major component of a commitment towards dropouts.

I want to ask you to be more specific with respect to the sense of vision that you provided. I will quote directly from your report, if I may, and from that will flow a question. You stated in your report:

"We stream these young people in certain directions, but we do not stream them towards something. Co-op and other work study programs, counselling, job and training programs and apprenticeships are all useful, but they are not nearly enough. Together, they represent no visible path, no direction, no goal. They are no system. They are too fragmented. Young people, teachers, employers cannot see the connections between these programs, so they do not make the links between them that are necessary. Things that look like bits and pieces get used like bits and pieces."

We went from your report to Radwanski, who was to deal with dropouts. In my opinion, he wrote his recommendations and then decided to build the report around them after he had written them. That is how I feel he approached it.

Now we have come to the third phase, which is this committee's activities. Mr. Johnston has challenged this committee that perhaps we should be looking at the next 10 years to look at major adjustments that would put us on a new course that will strengthen those linkages.

Could you expand for us, please, what you foresaw in terms of your visitations to the high schools, your understanding of the human side of it, the students' needs and the continuum and its impact on our school system? You are not a teacher or an educator, and that is what was somewhat refreshing about your approach to your report.

Mr. Dryden: It has been a while since I have looked at that report, but I will try my best to recall what I said and the reasons for saying it.

I thought there were a couple of fundamental reasons that we did not do better within the system dealing with dropouts and potential dropouts, and unless those things were kept in mind, we could do all kinds of things and spend all kinds of money but with very little change, with very few results.

Some of those, first of all, had to do with the question, one of the questions I raised in my presentation, who is this education system for? I mean, is it for everybody, or is it only for those who succeed through it and are looking to go on to the next level of education? Is the purpose of elementary school to prepare kids for high school? Is the purpose of high school to prepare kids for university and colleges? Who is it for?

What I was trying to imagine was why we got to where we are. It is my own speculation–and I do not know whether it is right, but it seemed to make some sense. I tried it out on some people, and they seemed to buy it, so until I hear otherwise, I guess this is the way I imagine things to be: that is, we provided a universal system many years ago, but the culture, the circumstances of the time were such that what was offered in school and what was required outside of school in terms of work was not such that everybody really needed to go through the whole system.

In fact, a very common act, and indeed a responsible act, and very much almost the ethic of the time 50 and 60 years ago, was to quit school. It was to go out and help support the family. There was a lot of pride taken in saying, "No, I am going out to help the family get along." Presumably, it came from the necessities of the time, but it became an ethic out of that time. In many ways, the system adapted to it, and very well. People could drop out in grade 9 and grade 10, start in a job, start at the bottom, work their way up, learn some new things, become self-educated, become self-made men, go on from promotion to promotion and make very successful lives and very good careers out of it.

My own personal vivid example of that is my father. My father is a grade 9 dropout. He said that to me all his life. Whenever something came up, especially if it related back positively on him, it would always be, "Pretty good for a grade 9 dropout, huh?" That is the way things were. He dropped out, he had the chance, he took the chance, he made it work and he succeeded.

One of the difficulties in travelling around the province and talking about some of these things was that the province is filled with 60-, 70- and 80-year-old grade 9 dropouts who made it. When you talk about a lot of these things, it is very tough to get that message across and that things are a little different.

What I would say is dramatically different is the fact that if you drop out in grade 9 or grade 10 now, you pay a real price. It is tough to get into any kind of job that is almost literally not a dead-end job that in fact does lead somewhere. We can all say that it leads to work skills. You learn how to work; you learn that you are supposed to show up every day and those things.

Granted, you do pick up those things, but an awful lot of what made the old system work was that the employer made some kind of commitment towards the person who was hired. They knew that this was the system. They would come

in, dropping out in grade 9, get a job, work hard, work their way up. There was some sense of continuity. This person might be here 10 years from now and in a much more advanced job, so the message back to the employee was that this was the case. That is a very constructive kind of environment.

Now, it is much different. With those kinds of jobs, basically the message from the employer, and then back from the employee to the employer, is: "You are interchangeable. You are largely irrelevant. You are here to perform a job. If we have another job to do, we will get somebody else to do it." It is much harder to move your way up the line. Of course, what is of crucial value is finding yourself in an environment where you do get a second chance and where you can learn.

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One of the things–again, I cannot believe I never thought of it until a short time ago–is how short a time people are in the educational system and how long a time we are outside of the educational system and how much of what we really learn comes afterwards and how much of what we really learn has to do with the environment that we are in.

Are we in a job circumstance that is challenging, that is difficult, that requires us to do more, that requires us to do a variety of different tasks? If so, it is leaps and bounds. You just start to, as the word goes, grow; you stretch and learn more and more, and with no real surprise. Basically, the school learning environment has become the work learning environment.

The question then is, what is the environment? If the environment is simply one of washing dishes or something like that, after five years' time, you are not going to have learned a heck of a lot. You may come out at the same level as somebody, but depending on what your job is five years from now, just as it is with kids in a school circumstance, the gap starts to widen and gets bigger and bigger.

The gap for the person who is 18 years old who is in grade 13 versus the kid 18 years old who has dropped out of school may not be all that much, but take a look at them 10 years later and it is very big. It gets bigger and bigger as time goes on. All it is is sort of basic learning theory. The more you know, the more you are able to learn. If you put yourself in an environment where you are able to learn, then things can change dramatically.

All of this is a long tangent from the original question, but basically, going back to what is fundamental to it all is that question, who is this system for? In helping to answer the question, let's be very clear and very sure that we know the implications of our answer and that those kids who drop out are not like the kids who dropped out 50 years ago. This world and this province may be filled with grade 9 dropouts who are 60 years old who made it, but 50 years from now and 40 years from now, this province will not be filled with grade 9 dropouts who made it. There is a fundamental difference right there.

So this is answering the question, which is very serious, who is it for? If, in fact, certain people do not seem to do very well within the system, does that mean that we try harder with them or is it just the fact that they do not do very well within it and it is too bad, and then they will make do in the best way they can?

One other kind of fundamental thing, as you alluded to in that quotation, is simply to ask, "What is predictable human behaviour under any kinds of circumstances?". That to me is almost the standard with which to apply these tests in terms of the school.

If you have no real goal in mind, if you have no real goal in front of you that somebody else presents for you, if you do not really sense that there is a way to get to that goal, for most people–not everybody–your sort of predictable human behaviour for the most part is going to be that you are not going to get the most out of that person. It is going to be harder to get up in the morning. It is going to be harder to stay where you are supposed to be all day long. It is going to be harder to take things home at night. It is going to be harder to work at things at home.

It does not mean that a lot of kids do not do it; they do. But predictably, if those are your circumstances, a certain behaviour follows. Too often what follows is the fact that without that goal within the system, with the streaming away from rather than in the direction of something else, it brings out the least characteristics of those people rather than bringing out the best.

Madam Chairman: I am sure Mr. Dryden's comments on streaming lead into the next questioner, Mr. Johnston, although I understand there are also rumours he is going to ask about statistics and the committee's long-term challenge.

Mr. Jackson: They are all over his desk there.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I feel obligated to start off with statistics because Mr. Jackson said I should.

Mr. Dryden: That desk looks like mine.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This is organized.

I think your points around the outcomes for those dropouts are really evident in some of the census information we have just received again, in that only 12 per cent of high-level management people have less than grade 12. It is the same for middle management.

Mr. Dryden: That will be a whole lot less in a few years' time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Another interesting fact is that 60-some per cent of them are people with some college and university. In fact, it may even be that the grade 12 graduation distinction is not going to be that large from the dropout of somewhere between grades 9 and 12. That is something we have not really talked an awful lot about. What is the difference in outcome if you get your grade 12 certificate or you do not? You have 27 credits instead of 30, and then you leave. What are your outcomes going to be? Are they going to be that much different? A lot of kids who are dropping out are making the judgement that it is not going to make that much difference, especially in a high-functioning economy such as we have at the moment.

There is a great temptation to ask you questions coming out of your report, but rather than do that, I would like to respond to the things you have said this morning and deal specifically with your major recommendation, which is a national commission, and come at it from two sides.

One is that education, being the ballpark of the provinces, one, makes a national commission a very difficult thing to establish and, two, maybe makes it a very difficult one to have any relevance. My point is that if we had a commission such as you are suggesting take place, with it being a federal national commission, what is the likelihood of that actually becoming a benchmark for those people who are implementing policy at the provincial level, whether they are legislators or educators?

Do you see that as a problem? If you do, how do you see the provinces, where the actual decision-making is taking place in education all the time, fitting into this in terms of maybe their own commissions or fitting into the national commission so that process does continue and does not just come out with a nice 120-page report which says the philosophical things, raises the question that we are all struggling with but goes nowhere because it does not have any way of fitting into the jurisdictions?

Mr. Dryden: I think it can be problematic. Obviously, that was something I had to think through pretty hard before making the recommendation. In order for it to happen, I think that it would largely need to be a noncreature of government. There would be some government assistance perhaps, but it would be out of the tradition of normal commissions which are governmental, and much of the resources would need to be private.

In terms of the process afterwards that you talk about, I am not sure that a public makes much of a distinction or differentiation in most areas as to whether it is something of provincial jurisdiction or federal jurisdiction. What I would see as the value of a commission like this is that it would be a very public commission with a very public document. It would require the kinds of things you are talking about later on, and I think that is what has happened out of the Carnegie work.

Certain individual states then take it and run with it, and others do not. That is part of the competition they are generating among themselves. But if there is a public that has for itself something that can act as a reference point that deals not with jurisdiction but with a discussion of an educational system, then I think it is less of a problem that it is not a product of a particular jurisdiction.

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Really, what I would see out of this is that it would be a highly orchestrated public activity and would use some nontraditional ways in which to make it a public thing. The response would be such that individuals and individual politicians within specific provinces would pick it up or not pick it up, but a different environment would be created and a different kind of pressure would result out of it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have some difficulties with it conceptually because if you look at our last benchmark study that was done in this province, the Hall-Dennis report, without a doubt it set a debate that was established around the philosophy of that report. In some regards, I suppose, the report has been implemented. In many other ways it never has been. Radwanski, in my view, sets up a number of straw men in attacking the outcomes of the Hall-Dennis report because, in my view, a lot of those things never did find their way into the classroom. What he is attacking never really was implemented.

But if we had a provincial task force like that which did look at the broad questions in the 1960s and came forward with a major set of recommendations which became then the philosophical underpinnings of discussion for the next two decades now, and we have the chaos that we have that you describe, and the lack of clarity in a

number of areas in terms of educational philosophy and implementation, why do you suggest something at a national level with less direct impact on the individual implementing jurisdictions? You say implementation is the difficulty.

I do not see why you think that would be more effective than the province, as some groups have suggested to us, I think, establishing a major task force, commission, whatever you want to call it, to rethink Hall-Dennis, not to take a portion of the problem, as Radwanski did, but to set a new benchmark in the province and work from there, given that all the structures would then fit into it.

Mr. Dryden: I do not disagree with that. The province could do it that way. I guess the reason I suggest something national is that I think education is a national problem as well as a provincial problem. I am not sure you would pay that much of a price for having a commission that would be beyond the jurisdictional boundaries because I think the biggest problem is creating the environment for change. I think that kind of commission can do that.

I think the structures come later and the individual provinces with jurisdiction can plug things into those structures. But what really is required is a discussion and debate on the directions and purposes, and in the end offering something as a reference point to a public so that you can bring the whole thing, the quality of education, into the political process.

I would just see it as an additional sort of top-down step. It certainly could be done within the province without that. As a member of a public, and not being a politician, I tend to react a little bit more seriously towards those things that feel national, even if what I need to do is something that can only be done locally or provincially. If it has the stamp on it of something that is taking that kind of national look, then I look two or three times. I will maybe look only once or twice if it is provincial.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think there may be a role for that kind of ginger action from the top, but I would worry about its being in isolation from some pre-agreed-upon concept of how to follow from it and how to implement it nationwide. I just think it may evaporate, like so many national reports, into nothingness. We have enough problems with our own provincial reports ending up gathering dust. I think you can look at the statistics on what happens to federal reports and their implementation; if you do not have the structure, you do not have the available means.

Mr. Dryden: There are a few things. First, it is not a federal report, it would be national; second, is that not the destiny of reports? Reports are there and reports are done for a particular reason, and they can go somewhere or go nowhere. At one time that used to bother me a lot, especially when I thought about it.

Mr. Jackson: Especially your own report. You can say it, Ken.

Mr. Dryden: I guess I believe far more in the power of a report now than I used to. Even if there is not a step-by-step way of implementation across the country in various ways or even within any individual jurisdiction, reports get into the ether.

You cannot make enough recommendations and set out enough steps to follow that will get you from here to there. In any report, even if you have 300 recommendations and you set them out in a step-by-step way, what happens is that there are several thousand recommendations between the lines that you never thought of. Unless the sense is there, unless the basic understanding, the angle, is present, then none of the rest really matters.

That is what I think is the real value of a report: getting it down in a way that is challenging and at the same time has considerable backing for it, and getting it out there.

Gradually, what I believe is that people just start to shift their thinking a little bit. All those people who are not part of the 300 recommendations or even the 2,000 recommendations that seem to be extraneous to the whole system, think about things just a little bit differently. They may even perform their functions a little bit differently.

So I do not have any problem with the lack of specificity in this kind of way. If reports are intended to do that, I think they are always destined for failure. You may well be aware of certain reports that have almost been implemented as written, but I am not. Also, as you go down the line, a year from now or two years from now things change, and recommendation 5, which seemed to make an awful lot of sense, does not make sense any more, but what does make sense is the sense of angle and direction.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I feel a little frustrated because of the time we have with you, but if that is the case, what is the failure with process in Radwanski?

Mr. Dryden: I think the problem there is the way in which it happened.

About six months ago I was out at a session at the Peel Board of Education that was basically set up as Rocky V. It was Radwanski, it was John Fraser and it was the great debate. The audience

was Peel teachers and other educators. It was a very interesting afternoon. Listening to the debate was in part interesting, but what was far more interesting was the response of the audience.

Radwanski talked about streaming and John Fraser said he found streaming repugnant. Then they got into specifics and somebody from the vocational side said: "We do great work. I see the kids coming in, I see them going out. They get jobs. It works. Does that mean, Mr. Radwanski, you are still in favour of this limited curriculum?" He said, "Yes," and John Fraser said, "Gee, there is a role for this kind of thing too," begging the question, "Isn't that how streaming starts?"

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We had this audience that was listening to the whole thing and basically saying to themselves: "We really don't believe you. We have been in the classroom for five years, 10 years or 15 years and we would really like to believe you, but we don't. We see kids. We don't think they can be taught the same things. Even if we teach them in a different way, we really don't believe it. We look at you and we see an outsider. We hear you and we hear somebody who sounds like an outsider. We read your stuff and, to us, it feels like the stuff of an outsider. The way in which you understand these things, it sure sounds to us like you are an outsider. So we really don't believe you.

"If for a minute we would believe you and believe the studies you cite that say if you deal with kids in a certain kind of way, you can teach them the same things, we don't believe for a second that the government is going to be willing to fund 1,000 pilot projects as opposed to 10, which may suggest that all this works. So one, instinctively we don't, but two, even if we suspend disbelief for a time, we don't believe you."

As long as the John Frasers of the world, across the stage from Mr. Radwanski at that time, say basically that they do not believe that as well, then all that audience is going to say: "You are an outsider, you sound like an outsider, you look like an outsider, you write like an outsider, you think like an outsider and we don't believe you. If we don't believe you, then we don't see any opportunity or promise in the things you say."

So to me, what I mean when I say the process was faulty is that it was one person. The same words could come from a group of 15 people, and as long as there were 10 or 12 people and as long as the John Frasers of the world were part of that kind of report, then maybe that audience would start to listen, start to wonder and start to think around what was being said. Unless and until that happens, I think you have a hugely resistant audience. So I do not believe things are going to go very far in that particular regard.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is lucky then that the individual report by Ken Dryden was not treated the same way as an outsider. I am not going to be allowed to debate with you any more.

Mr. Mahoney: I have received a note from the chair that I have to be brief, and I do everything the chair says.

Mr. Dryden: I am sorry, I have to be briefer.

Mr. Mahoney: I will try.

I was curious and interested in your comments about 9L and 13E and how it took you 20 years to realize that was streaming, because I had the exact same experience. In fact, it seemed like it was designed and somebody kept it a secret. I do not think our parents really knew. If they did, they did not discuss it with us. I do not recall in those days whether or not there were select committees or commissions discussing exactly what it was. It just seemed of a different era. But clearly that is what it was, a form of streaming.

On the streaming thing from your experience, I want to ask you something about the commission but before I do that, we are debating and will be debating a lot the pros and cons of early identification in, say, grade 8. A 12- or 13-year-old kid sitting down with quite often a single mom saying: "What should I do? Should I go basic, general or advanced? I do not understand this. I have all this confusion. Next year, my God, I am going from Islington public school to Etobicoke where you have 400 kids versus 2,000 kids. I am nervous and I do not understand it." Mom does not either, because she is so confused and busy trying to survive. In many cases, mom and dad are in that same scenario.

Is it beneficial, in your mind, that we make choices at that stage or should we be in fact putting them off to allow that child and that parent to have the experience of secondary education for a year or two?

Mr. Dryden: This is more an instinctive than it is a studied reaction. I guess what I have heard is presumably what you have heard in that regard, that the real problem starts to show itself in the transition from grade 8 to grade 9, and from elementary school to high school. Whether it is just a new environment and new teachers or new

ways of doing things, those that were behind really fall behind in it.

My instinctive reaction is that you do not make the choice then, but you recognize that in fact there are people situated in such a way that they have separated themselves. There are kids who seem to be going in two different directions. Unless you acknowledge that at that point and unless you acknowledge all of what has happened up until then and the major disruptions and dislocations of moving to a new school and new systems of doing things, those kids are going to fall further and further behind.

So, in effect, you may as well have made the streaming decision. In effect, you acknowledge that and the extraordinary effort is taken at that time, so the decision is not taken about whether to go in one area or not, but you recognize the problem as opposed to dealing with it in that particular way.

Mr. Mahoney: In a sense, it leads to the next question which is sort of supplementary, in that you also stated that you got frustrated. I think your words were that you could not hack it any more when you came to the realization that no matter what you did or said, a third of the kids were going to drop out anyway.

You felt certain frustrations there. Those kids presumably are the kids that you were talking about in the answer to my first question. We have obviously done a substantial job of improving that situation over the 1950s and 1960s when the dropout rate was over 50 per cent. It is now down fairly substantially. Whether that is a function of societal changes or government directions is probably an argument for another day.

You talk, with respect, with almost a certain amount of cynicism about the process of studying education and attempting to address a dropout problem below a certain level. There are always going to be those who, when I went to school, were called the "two-percenters." They are likely more than two per cent, but that is what they were referred to.

There is always going to be that problem no matter what we do. The question is, if we accept that premise and the reality that you could not hack it beyond that because of that frustration and that reality, what then would the result be from a commission that you are suggesting and why would we set up a commission to examine it from the top down, as opposed to something that is more of an advocate position for young people, such as the youth secretariat that used to be in this province?

Mr. Dryden: The reason I am making the recommendation, and I tried to state it in a couple of paragraphs in the presentation, is that I guess I believe there are a lot of people in this province and in this country who are very interested in education and the education system. They are very concerned about it, but there is no particular focus.

I imagine that you must be wrestling with many of these same problems. How do you get a grip on an education system? You hear from 100 different people and they seem to go in 100 different directions. How do you get a grip on something like that? Where some of this began, I do not know if any of you saw it a year or so ago on The Journal; they had a two-part or three-part show proceeding basically discussing the educational system. They set it up in a confrontational way. They had those who were ostensibly the apologists and those who were looking for great change. You could sense their frustration and the frustration of the audience in the forum. Also, I felt, in watching it at home, this sense of great interest, great energy, but where is the common language, where is something to focus on?

1130

You start talking about one thing and somebody brings up something else and then something else and you feel yourself chasing your own tail. The reason I think a commission is enormously valuable is only in part what it gets down and far more what it in its totality represents at the end; that is, that it can function as that reference point, as that lightning rod, as something to direct all of that interest, all of that concern, all of that energy there which otherwise I think disappears. If more than a little bit of change is necessary, I think that message has to be very clear.

Right now, if I am a politician, I am probably saying, "Golly, I do feel this disquiet, I do feel as if things are not right," but I cannot honestly say I really know the direction in which all of this is supposed to go. I am really asking for people to spend more money, to disrupt their lives, to do all of these other things. Boy, I had better really have a fairly sure idea if I am going to be asking those things. I also think that if you are going to get to more than a 3.3 per cent increase from year to year and/or a 3.3 per cent increase in attention in an area, if you are going to to make a leap, if you are going to try to do something more substantial, you have to have that sense of solid ground out there behind you.

What I see is no solid ground at all, great interest but no solid ground, no sense of

direction. The evidence of that is the fact of education not really becoming a political issue. I think that sort of the saving point in this way is the point at which the quality of education really becomes a political issue, where the Liberal Party, the Tories and the New Democratic Party have different platforms on the quality of education and they start competing among themselves, just as in other areas. Then I think you have the environment for the kind of change that is needed. Without that kind of public document, public activity that focuses the discussion and the debate, I do not see any real coattails out there for action at all.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess it is an interesting perspective to be outside of here looking and saying that it is not a political issue. When we live it virtually every day, as we have in this committee for the past seven weeks and several years, it seems to me to be a public issue.

Mr. Dryden: Look at the election campaigns. It seems to me that early in the last campaign education came out pretty quickly as something. It died, was gone. I do not know that I read a public word about education after that. Each party would have their program and policy, but–

Mr. Mahoney: It becomes more one of dollars, I think, rather than quality. Maybe that is what you are saying, with organizations like the Ontario Public Education Network and others, that the issue of funding education clearly is a political lobby point during any political campaign that I have been involved in, but the issue of quality is a little harder to grasp. If I am interpreting you correctly, I think that is what I hear you saying. It is an issue we have to face, but is it the quality? Maybe this committee, in dealing with the issues, which are more nuts and bolts in a sense than what you are talking about–but I do not think you can have a process without those nuts and bolts–maybe those nuts and bolts are going to focus on the quality.

Mr. Dryden: But it is putting the nuts and bolts together into something. To me, what happens is that you, as a voter and as a citizen, are faced with nuts and bolts and presumably those nuts and bolts are part of something. That is what I can grasp, that is what can interest me, that is what can make me feel as if I want to vote for your party and not your party.

One of the very constructive things that has happened out of the Carnegie Forum report in the US is that education has become far more of a political issue. It was the lead agenda item in terms of the national association of governors or whatever that group is officially called. You hear in the election campaigns now of Dukakis wanting to become the education president, and that creates a competitive environment.

That means that this school board over here is saying to itself: "Here is our opportunity. We want to improve what we are offering in these schools so that people will locate here, so businesses will locate here, so they will come to our state and our town. That can be our leg up in a very competitive world and we are going to make education a cornerstone and a political issue."

I think we are a long way away from that, and so long as we are a long way away from that, I see no kind of real public push, public acceptance for the kinds of things that are required to meet the rhetoric that we use about an educational system that we want.

This sort of a forum is a useful forum, but this is not a galvanizing one. The report that will come out of this committee is not going to be a galvanizing political instrument.

Madam Chairman: That may remain to be seen.

Mr. Mahoney: You are getting me depressed. Here I thought we were doing something useful.

I would suggest a commission, by the way, with Fraser, Radwanski, Dennis and Dryden on it. I think education would be in the front pages every day.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is a bit sexist.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is for sure.

Mr. Mahoney: All right, O'Neill then.

Madam Chairman: A final question by Mr. Keyes. We have less than five minutes left.

Mr. Keyes: I think a couple of comments you made, Ken, are very important. When you talked about those other studies that impressed you, you talked about their brevity and that they were meant to be read. We certainly hope that is exactly what our report will be that comes from here, that it will be brief and it will be read, but what really makes it be read, of course, whether it is your report, Radwanski's or the rest of them, is the amount of play that it gets in the press. I think we ought to say here that for seven weeks, we have had great press every day that has certainly focused a lot of the attention of the public on what has been going on.

I question slightly your commission concept, because it may not just pick up–it is across Canada you were trying to talk about it. We have had recommended that we should have an advisory council on education, perhaps, that would do some of the same things, bring people in the business community and the teaching

community who meet on an ongoing basis every year. Maybe we should have a select committee of the Legislature every year as well, because that might then tend to galvanize and serve as the lightning rod for the public to come and make representations on different issues. I think perhaps you might then find more of a focus on it.

I just leave that, because that was the question. I can ask only one question, so it gives you a chance to comment on it.

The other one is, when you were doing your travelling around, you must have been able to gather a great amount of information from those young people as to where they felt society had failed them, those who became dissatisfied with the system and left school. People always say where the education system has failed them, but I do not like to put all the blame on education.

Once you have heard those things, where do you suggest some of those major changes should be, since you have said change is needed that is more than a little of this and a little of that? Many of the people appearing here have said: "Don't touch the system too much. We think it merely needs"–a cliché–"a little fine-tuning at the present time. There have been so many changes made in the last five years in education; give us a chance to assimilate those into the system. If we do, we will be turning out a better product."

Mr. Dryden: I think of what I said in response to, I guess it was question of the member for Burlington South (Mr. Jackson) earlier. Again, and what I would say is that there are a few benchmark attitudes, approaches that are necessary before you have any real difference, especially in the dropout area, and unless and until those are there, unless there is a clear understanding within the system that the system is there to provide an education for everybody and not just those who are easiest to deal with, that it is the system's job to spend more time, to work a little harder, to offer more resources for those who do not have an easier time, then gains in the area of dropouts are going to be hard to come by. Without setting the kinds of target and the goal at the end for those kinds of kids, you are not going to get the best out of them, either.

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I would argue, at least in that particular area, that pretty significant change is required there. It may well not be that you need very much in terms of new and different programs in that way, but it really is something that is almost far more difficult than that, of coming to that acceptance of what the system is for.

The point I would make in the early part of it–I tried to make it earlier and I guess I have not been very successful in doing it–is that I frankly do not see that advisory committees and things like that are galvanizing bodies. I do not think they are very public. I do not think they are groups that take all that much initiative. I do not know that they orchestrate themselves as they can or should. I do not know whether they have the access, in some ways, to orchestrate.

I can see the value of those things but if the purpose is to bring education far more to the centre, then I think the centre has to have a much better grasp of what the alternatives for an education system are and I do not think that is going to happen unless education becomes a real political issue, a real platform campaign issue and I do not see that kind of thing happens out of advisory committees.

Mr. Keyes: But what about on a select committee where you are taking the political people who are involved and you have them listening and providing an opportunity for the public to have that direct input?

Mr. Dryden: I guess I am sceptical.

Madam Chairman: We hate to leave on that depressing note, that you are sceptical.

Mr. Dryden: That is not intended as a depressing note at all, really. There was a comment earlier about my being cynical about this. I do not think I am being cynical in terms of understanding how the system may have worked in that regard. That is just human nature and that is fine. All it is is something to recognize; that is all. It is there and likely that is how people are going to act in those kinds of circumstances, and that is nothing to be cynical about at all. Nor am I, in this regard.

I think there are terrific opportunities this way. It really is a very exciting field but I think we have to provide the instrument that can unleash some of that excitement. I think that is what the teachers are looking for as well, that they themselves are looking for the kind of promise and sense of optimism that something can provide.

Madam Chairman: On behalf of the select committee on education, I would like to thank you very much for the time and effort you have taken to come before us today. I know the committee members have enjoyed discussing some of your philosophy with you. We very much appreciate your contribution to our committee.

That concludes the public hearings portion of this stage of the select committee on education. We now go into our report-writing phase. I believe all members by now do have a copy of the possible framework that has been prepared by research. Would you make sure you bring that with you this afternoon, as well as the summary of briefs prepared by research.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: When will we be getting the information, or some idea from the ministry as to what information is going to be available or not available to us of the things we have been asking for, even just a list so that we will know what is on stream, what could not be found, what we might get by November something or other? That kind of thing would be very useful in terms of the actual writing of the report, if we knew what might be coming or not coming.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think Mr. Lipischak has that available. I was just discussing with him some of the things you have requested. I think he could at least give us that if we gave him a little bit of time, say, a few days. I am sure that Ms. Mellor could verify that with him.

Madam Chairman: We will have the clerk contact Mr. Lipischak and get a date by which we will definitively know what information will or will not be forthcoming.

There is another procedural matter that we should deal with before we adjourn until this afternoon. We have to decide, as a committee, whether we are going to prepare the report in camera or on the record. I understand that the precedent has usually been that the report-writing phase is in camera, but it is definitely a decision of the committee. I would like a motion to the effect that the committee's report-writing phase will be either in camera or on the record.

Mr. Reycraft: Does the motion need to be in writing, or can I simply make it orally?

Madam Chairman: An oral motion will be acceptable.

Mr. Reycraft moved that the committee meet in camera to prepare its report.

Madam Chairman: Is there any discussion on the issue?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have had this discussion in private as we have been flying about the province. I was hoping that the Liberals on the committee might change their minds about this, as the government of no walls and open access and all those wonderful clichés that David Peterson brought with him to a huge majority. Instead, people are determined, for one reason or another–usually for the old reasons that we can talk more freely and all those kinds of things and move with greater flexibility to change positions than we can if we deal with things in public–not to look at the question about whether or not it might be very useful for us to have at least part of the process in public.

There are precedents which run counter to that old tradition that some committees have of doing everything in private as far as report writing goes. I refer you to the select committee on privatization and commercialization of health and social services–again, I think that is important–in which we deliberately determined not just to hold our hearings in public but to do our report writing in public as well. We produced a massive report which came out several months later, as ours will come out several months later, but the decisions about where the committee was going were known well in advance by the press and were covered and set a tone for the actual report's arrival months later that was very useful.

Since we are not expecting our report to be out until February some time because of all the problems of writing and translation–maybe even later, depending when we finish it–and because of the importance of this issue for the reason Mr. Dryden has mentioned in terms of setting tones and agendas politically, as well as our own desire to know where we are going in the future as the second part of our report, and to give the education community some kind of notion of what this committee is all about and that there is not just a hiatus for the next three to four months while a report gets finalized and produced, I think it would be very appropriate for this committee to at least have a fair amount of its report writing done in public.

If there is a sensitivity around some of the more animated debate we may have over controversial aspects of the issues like streaming. At that time, I think procedural motions are always in order, if people wish at that point to go on in camera to have a knock-them-out kind of fight with each other, letting caucus solidarities disappear as individuals put forward their own points of view. That is something I am willing to accommodate at that point.

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We are talking this afternoon of going into our report-writing phase, which is really an organizational phase, which I do not think any of us believe will arrive at anything more than the points of consensus and earmarking the points of difference as well as some notions of what the structure might look like, because on any of the

really serious contentious issues I suggest to you that none of us is going to be able to act in isolation here without going to our caucuses. I am certainly not going to be able to. I will tell you that right now. While I may have very strong opinions on some of the matters, although you would be surprised to know that, I am not going to be putting them forward as a party position until I know what my caucus feels in these matters.

Therefore, on the notion of going in camera for this afternoon when we are going to sit here and basically go through the very helpful framework that Ms. Porter has put forward and think of how we might want to ask for more statistical information bases, things like that, and how we want to look at the questions of consensus, upon which there should be no problem of meeting in public, I do not see any difficulty with that. We should, therefore, have at least this afternoon's session in public, and I would argue for their all being in public, so that people feel there is a very open process.

There may be people here who feel that somehow the sacrosanct nature of a report being kept secret until the date it is unveiled to the public is highly important, in terms of getting the great public effect Mr. Dryden was talking about, being important in terms of galvanizing people's minds. That has not been my notion of how committee reports have been received by the public, but there is always hope that might happen some day.

I suggest to you at least certain kinds of issues we will be dealing with, on which there is consensus, do not need to be hidden for the next number of months and it would be helpful to get them out to the education community at least at this stage. Therefore, I am speaking in opposition to the resolution and suggesting that this afternoon we should be in public. Maybe the steering committee can work out some means of determining when we will go in and out of in camera, if people feel that is useful. In my view, it would be a really good process for us to do this in public and not behind closed doors. By the way, Mr. Reville now agrees with me. I swung him over.

Madam Chairman: He was just relieved that you were taking your radical ideas back to caucus.

Mr. Keyes: He arrived for a purpose.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Reycraft, do you wish to speak to your motion before we go to Mr. Jackson?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I thought I did it.

Mr. Reycraft: I intend to speak to it as well, Mr. Johnston. In support of it rather than against it, obviously. I will be very candid. I do not have the same kind of experience in report writing that Mr. Johnston has, nor do my colleagues from my caucus on this committee. For that reason, I find it very difficult to try to project what kind of discussions are going to take place, even in the early stages of report writing this afternoon. Perhaps if I had that confidence, I might feel differently about meeting in camera, but I do not. I do not really have a good sense of the things that we are going to be able to achieve a consensus on at this particular point.

Mr. Johnston has indicated that while there are exceptions to it, the general practice in the Legislature has been to do report writing in camera, so that the contents of a report are made public all at once rather than released in a sort of piecemeal fashion with the matters on which there is consensus being released first and the rest coming at a later time.

Certainly, it is going to be my objective, as we proceed to write the report, to try to achieve consensus to the greatest extent possible. I realize that given the statements that have been made during the last several weeks by various members on the committee, that may be difficult. It will certainly require that there be some degree of compromise from positions that have been taken in the past.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is almost as bad as entrepreneurial.

Mr. Reycraft: It is going to be much more likely that we achieve those compromises if we meet in camera rather than if we try to negotiate and to achieve them in a public way. For that reason, I prefer that the committee meet in camera this afternoon and in future sessions as we write our report.

Mr. Jackson: I will be voting against the motion. Having participated in an in camera session on the subject in a limousine on the way to the airport in Windsor, it gave new meaning to the process: it was an in-cab meeting. As I recall, we were not too frightened of having our meeting in the presence of a cab driver from Windsor. At this time, there is one citizen in Ontario who has full knowledge of what we are at and about to do.

Given that we have this rather unorthodox precedent, it moves my mind to echo the sentiments of Mr. Johnston for the equally valid reasons he enunciated. In the interest of time, I will not go over those. I personally have learned an awful lot through the process of these hearings

and I am prepared and our caucus is prepared to proceed with a very open mind on the issues. Therefore, I think particularly with this report it would be helpful and challenging for us to do it in a completely open forum. I certainly am prepared and our caucus is certainly prepared to proceed with that clearly up front. We do not have a fixed agenda. We know we would like to move and we have made it very clear that we would like to move to some form of permanent standing committee committee on education. That is the direction we would like to go, and I think much of what we do in this committee on this report will set the tone for that. Therefore, I think in its initial stage we should do our report in an open forum.

I will support the sentiments Mr. Johnston conveyed. I will not support Mr. Reycraft's motion. My opinion has not been changed, and I am sure if I called that cab driver in Windsor, he would agree with me.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Jackson omits to say that the first half of our steering committee was in the van on the way to the airport and the second half of it took place at the bar at the airport, all of us drinking coffee and tea, of course.

Mr. Reville: Tom Cruise is involved in this too.

Mr. Mahoney: So there are two people involved in this.

Mr. Jackson: Then we had better get an explanation of what was meant by a compromise.

Madam Chairman: Before we go to an explanation of compromise, I think Mr. Mahoney–

Mr. Mahoney: I have just a couple of brief comments. First, I was thinking about this in terms of what the role of the select committee is. I did not see the role of the select committee as individuals who were going to report back to caucus before they decided whether they were going to support a certain notion that might be put on the floor during a meeting. If you folks need to go to your caucus to get your marching orders, then I guess I misunderstood because I certainly do not intend to.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think you better check that out, Steve.

Mr. Mahoney: I have checked it out and I am quite comfortable with it. I thought we were here, really, as an independent group that was going to try to look at this thing in a nonpartisan way as much as possible, and we have done that up until about 15 minutes ago.

Interjections.

Mr. Mahoney: I love heckling because it means I am getting my point across; so carry on.

The reality is that this is simply nothing more than strategy to make this committee appear to be a closed shop, and it is not. It has been wide open with seven weeks of very public hearings, great media coverage, I might add, and lots of attention. I think we have been extremely open. For us to continue these discussions without having an opportunity to go into in camera to write a report that could have tremendous impact on the education community would be a disservice to that community.

In that regard, I support the motion. It might come as a surprise to you, but I support it.

Mr. Jackson: We thought we had you there. We thought you were inches away–

Mr. Reville: Here is guy who has no marching orders at all.

Mr. Mahoney: You have got it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is right.

Mr. Reville: How did they miss you, Steve?

Mr. Mahoney: They know better.

Madam Chairman: I am trying to bring a modicum of order into this meeting.

Mr. Reville: There is drumbeat in my ear that I can hear.

Madam Chairman: I think I would be safe in saying that there is not consensus on this particular issue.

Mr. Mahoney: You have got it.

Madam Chairman: I would propose that we put Mr. Reycraft's motion to a vote.

All those in favour of holding the planning meetings in camera? All those opposed?

Interjections.

Madam Chairman: I think my education has been extensive enough that I can count six to four in favour.

Motion agreed to.

The committee adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Vice-Chairman: Reycraft, Douglas R. (Middlesex L)
Cooke, David S. (Windsor-Riverside NDP)
Furlong, Allan W. (Durham Centre L)
Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South PC)
Johnston, Richard F. (Scarborough West NDP)
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Villeneuve, Noble (Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry PC)

Substitution:
Reville, David (Riverdale NDP) for Mr. D. S. Cooke

Clerk: Mellor, Lynn

Clerk pro tem: Decker, Todd

Staff:
Porter, Ann, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service

Witness:

Individual Presentation:
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Hansard
Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Length of School Day and School Year

Education Financing

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First Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday, March 9, 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, March 9, 1989

The committee met at 10:10 a.m. in room 151.

ORGANIZATION

Madam Chairman: Good morning, and welcome to the select committee on education. We now have a quorum and all parties represented, so I think we will start the proceedings. We are now going to be considering the second phase of our mandate, the length of the school day and the school year, so we are very much looking forward to hearing from the educational community and other communities in Ontario concerning this very important topic.

Before we get down to business, there is an item I would like to bring up. We have sadly had to accept the resignation of Doug Reycraft, the vice-chairman of the committee. His duties as chief government whip preclude his spending more time on the committee. It is most unfortunate, because Mr. Reycraft has certainly contributed a great deal to our committee over the past year. As we bid him fond adieu, we have the duty to select a new vice-chairman, and also to welcome to the committee a new member, Charles Beer.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: On a point of order, Madam Chairman: In the nomination for election of a vice-chairman, is there going to be a limit on the nomination and acceptance speeches?

Madam Chairman: Given that I have heard a rumour about who is going to be nominated, I think there will definitely be a limit on the nomination speech.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are you saying Mr. Cooke has no chance at all?

Madam Chairman: Actually, that was the rumour I heard, that Mr. Cooke was going to stand for nomination.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: When I heard what the pay was, I decided to decline.

Madam Chairman: May I call for nominations?

Mr. Ballinger: It is my pleasure at this time to put forth the name of one Steve Mahoney, the biggest dropout I have ever met in my short tenure at Queen's Park.

Mr. Mahoney: This is in Hansard, Ballinger. Would you clean it up? It is on TV.

Mr. Ballinger: In fact, in our entire caucus of 94, I believe he is the only dropout we have. It is my pleasure at this time to move Steve Mahoney as vice-chairman.

Madam Chairman: I believe Mr. Mahoney also has the pleasure of being a dropin, which is a very important part of our educational system.

Mr. Mahoney: I think he is misleading the committee and the public, but he has been known to do that. The only thing I dropped out of was the press club.

Miss Nicholas: Is that a parliamentary word?

Madam Chairman: I think we have a request from Miss Nicholas to have a withdrawal of that word. She feels it is unparliamentary. I think under the circumstances we will let the term stand. Are there any other nominations?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Our candidate has withdrawn.

Madam Chairman: I think the public can tell that the committee members have had a very long session and that we are somewhat punchy at this stage, but I am sure we will get down to business and be very serious as we look at our issues.

Seeing no other nominations, I declare Mr. Mahoney will be the new vice-chairman of the committee. Congratulations. He certainly is going to do a fine job as vice-chairman and has made able contributions to the committee to date.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR

EDUCATION FINANCING

Madam Chairman: On a more serious note, I would like to go to the mandate of this session of the select committee, the length of the school day and the school year. For our first presentation today, we have the Ontario Principals' Association. Would you come forward, please? Welcome to the committee. I understand you have brought a special guest with you today.

ONTARIO PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Moore: Yes. I will introduce our panel first. My name is John Moore. I am past president of the Ontario Principals' Association. On my right is Alex McLachlin, who is the

current chairman of our association, and Sue Thornham, the vice-chairman.

Just before we get into our presentation, I thought I might introduce to you the lady who came in with me, Mrs. Qian Fenten, who is a teacher in China and is spending this year in my school on Interculture Canada to see the Ontario educational system.

Madam Chairman: Welcome to Canada and to our committee.

Mr. Moore: We do not assign her a class, but we have given her lots of jobs and she has been to several schools talking about China and education in China.

Madam Chairman: If you would like to come forward, we would be delighted to have you form part of the delegation.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If you do, you will be on television.

Mr. Ballinger I am not sure it is beamed all the way back to China.

Madam Chairman: It is a small consolation that you will be on television here in Ontario. Welcome to the committee. Would you like to proceed?

Mr. Moore: In the tradition of this summer, we would like to keep our formal presentation fairly brief and leave time for discussion. I have some written material for each of you.

Basically, what we are going to present this morning is that we are not looking for major changes in the school day or year but some modifications of those things which we feel will provide a more concentrated educational period of time and some more fine-tuning of the operation that I think will make it better for everyone.

We have divided our presentation into five statements which you will find in section B. I will elaborate a little on each one as we go along.

First, we are suggesting that the academic instructional day remain at five hours. We feel that is a long enough day when you put together with that the time that children spend in other things. When you consider the noonhour and recesses, you are automatically at a six-and-a-half-hour day. For many children who are bused, you can add another two hours to that. They are well past the eight hours of an actual educational day in the sense of belonging to the school or the school operation. We feel that the instructional part of the day should not be lengthened.

In many of the schools, the day is lengthened at both ends by house league programs and extra activities which may include music and could include things such as heritage languages. Beyond that, many students go for private lessons in various things. We feel, for the most part, that the instructional day for children is currently long enough when you add to it the many other things that go on.

In relation to the actual school year, again, 10 months seems to be an appropriate number, but we are suggesting some modification of that year. One of the problems, particularly for semestering systems at the current time, is that you are ending a semester at the end of January, and when you consider the lengthy Christmas break and a return for about two weeks, you really are writing off the last part of that semester.

We feel there could be several advantages if we changed the school year into two concentrated blocks of time. It would work fairly simply if you took one semester before Christmas, which would really mean a five-month block from about August 1 until Christmas, and then have your traditional Christmas break extending into the early part of January and then a concentrated block from January into the beginning of June.

It would really transpose our traditional summer earlier by about a month. I do not think the weather would be a problem. It certainly would be a change in tradition for many organizations, but it would give you a concentrated block of time with only an individual holiday like Thanksgiving, Labour Day or Easter breaking up each block rather than the traditional winter and Christmas breaks. It seems it would provide some opportunity.

The other thing I think it would offer would be a system of almost two mini-years. You could in fact have a kindergarten registration at the opening of each semester and children would be entering school closer to their birth dates rather than spread over a whole year. It also would provide a review process on children's progress twice a year.

1020

It would not change the year greatly for most children, but certainly for children with special needs, there could be changes in class placement at that mid-break point. I think that in a lot of ways it would provide a better program for children, a more regular review of their progress and a chance to more formally inform parents of how things are going, because you would need an end-of-term report and you would also need a mid-term information. You are really looking then at four reporting times to parents instead of the traditional three. It does offer some advan-

tages for kindergarten and some advantages for organizations, particularly for students with special needs.

The professional activity days, we feel, are probably one of the most misunderstood concepts that has come along in recent years. They certainly are of educational value from a professional standpoint.

One of the concerns that I think is fairly general is that they should be spread throughout the year rather than blocked at any one time of the year, as has often been the case with some boards to block a number of them in June. If they were spread throughout the year, it would be a chance to update program and a chance to meet parents. We are getting more and more involved with social services and children's aid and counselling agencies whose people seem to be available only through school time, and it would make a chance to meet with them on a regular basis and to review children's progress on a regular basis.

We feel that they should remain, and probably if there was some recommendation that they be placed one in each instructional month, then you are guaranteeing that they are available at appropriate times to keep updated with program and with children's needs rather than tending to congregate them at the end of the year.

On the one about school holidays, I think this year is a prime example of what we thought we were getting away from with the new school holiday regulations. I believe the idea a few years ago was to try to have consistent winter break holidays across the province. This year, of course, some boards applied to have their winter breaks four days later and tied on to Easter weekend. So this year again we have two different winter breaks.

I know in my own school, for instance, my vice-principal has one week off and his wife and children have a different week. I am not sure that he finds that a particular advantage.

We feel there should be a very set holiday period and it should be consistent for all boards. If it was appropriate to move the winter break to Easter, as some did this year, then it should have been appropriate for everyone. That would make a chance for families to be together when there are school holidays.

If in fact you accepted our proposal for the revised school year terms, there would not be a winter break anyway. The winter break would really be the first two weeks of January for everyone and it would not be a problem, but in case that does not happen, we think there should be a consistent holiday pattern for everyone.

I guess the one that is more a modification that is fairly easy to do is the co-ordination of the instructional and financial year. We seem to be all on different wavelengths, the school year being September to June, school boards' year being January to January and I believe the fiscal year for the ministry starts somewhere around April. We are starting in September to set up our classes and provide supplies, the board tells us in January how much money we have for the calendar year, and then it finds out in March or April how much it is going to get and already has borrowed into the millions to finance that.

It would seem to me that if we could start the process with the fiscal year of March or April and make the grants available, school boards could then do their budgeting and would in fact be collecting taxes in time for the opening of school in September instead of going into this deficit financing, borrowing money and paying interest every year. The school year, the financial year, could start in September being already planned, being already financed, and you would know exactly where you are financially and where you are in the materials and services that you can provide. That would be just a slight change in the timing of the process of financing.

As I said at the outset, I think basically the year and day are of an appropriate length, we are merely suggesting that some slight modifications of the financing and the timing of the school terms could enhance it for children and for the public.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Moore, for your very interesting comments. Would any other members of the delegation like to comment before we go to members' questions?

Ms. Thornham: There are a couple of further examples that might help. John talked about one of his staff having wife and children on a different break. That has happened, I think, in the instance of six of my staff, and it really does create havoc for those people in terms of having any kind of a family holiday.

Further, I am a principal in Peel, and in Peel the separate board and public board have chosen to take different breaks and that has created a great furore in the city recreation department. So it is not just educators who are affected by this mix. In terms of how we impact on the rest of the service people in the community, I think it is important that we are together on this.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the presentation. A basic question to start off with: You seem to be taking the premise that basically what we have at the moment is not bad but there

is some fine-tuning needed. I think that is the way you put it. On what do you base the notion that a 10-month school year is the appropriate mechanism and that moving to a semestering system at the elementary panel, which this seems to be talking about, is the appropriate pedagogical rather than just straight time organizational approach?

Mr. Moore: I guess the real basis was that in looking at some other systems–and again, we have not done that extensively–it seems that traditionally this has been accepted, but it needed a greater entry time for kindergarten and more of a review process in which children could naturally change to other classes rather than the change appearing to be such a special thing. It seemed to be that, rather than going into a three-block system, you could attend two, which would be an organizational nightmare and I am not sure anyone would understand. It seemed to be a modification that could accommodate some of those things without really changing major structure.

Mr. McLachlin: Personally, I think the summer holiday is too long as it is–the eight, 10 weeks–and that it would be possible to shorten it by adding at either end, so that you would have a longer break in the middle or even no extension of that break in the middle, but just shorten it in the summertime.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I understand the organizational rationale for it. I guess I was thinking more in terms of pedagogical assumption there.

We heard, in our first set of hearings, a fair amount of concern on semestering in terms of its effect on the secondary panel. We discovered there was a dearth of information in harsh, statistical fact about the effects of it on the quality of education at this stage, and one of our recommendations was that that kind of information start to be gathered.

For some organizational reasons I think it makes an awful lot of sense. To come back to the question of entry time, where I think it makes an awful lot of sense, I am wondering what kind of impact might take place at the elementary panel in terms of the pedagogy if we move to a semestering system. Is it going to have the same impact as it has had at the secondary level or is it going to be different because of the lack of specialization, etc.?

Mr. Moore: I would object to your term "semestering" at the elementary level. I do not see going to two blocks of time necessarily as semestering. For 95 per cent or 98 per cent of the children, I think we are still talking about a traditional year of about 10 months.

I am just thinking back. Okay, you use the word "semestering"; I do not like it but it fits. It gives you a chance to look at those special-needs children at a more appropriate break time than just some time in the year. I do not like the word "semestering," but I know what you are saying.

1030

Mr. D. S. Cooke: If you are not talking in terms of semestering, you referred to the possibility that students could be enrolled and begin school at a time closer to their age. Obviously, if kids were going to enrol in January as opposed to September, that would change a whole bunch of things about the organization of curriculum and would result in basically a semestered system. It would have to result in that.

Mr. Moore: There would be a number of those children enrolled in January who would come back into the traditional year, I would think, either by a shortened time in kindergarten or an extended time in the primary division. I think the number that were really on a Christmas promotion time, if you want, on a long-term basis would be fairly small.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: My understanding of what you are saying is that in fact it would be for the new kindergarten entrant at the end of January some time. That would be a semestered notion, but somehow before you get very far into the system, you are going to go back to these just being blocks of time in the curriculum.

I just do not understand, for those entrants in January, where they are somehow going to come on stream to a regular curriculum. I guess that is the thing I do not understand.

Ms. Thornham: I may be able to respond to that.

If you recall our last presentation, we talked about individual progress and all of that kind of thing. It seems to me that a five-month term lends itself far better to that than does, indeed, the current organization, where you only look at kids in terms of promotion in June. "Promotion" is a lousy word too, but the idea is that either they have achieved minimum standards in the areas that you have tried to deal with during that time or not. It seems to me that five months is a much more realistic period.

Currently, in our three-term school year, in my opinion teachers spend an inordinate amount of time writing report cards. When they are doing that, they are not teaching. They only have a

finite amount of energy. I really feel that two formal report cards a year is plenty. I am not denigrating the idea that parents must be kept informed, but a lot of that can be oral. It can be by telephone calls and so forth.

I feel very strongly that two five-month terms would in fact improve the pedagogy and improve the amount of instruction that is going on, because we would not be having these 90-day periods of having to spend 30 or 40 extracurricular hours developing written report cards and "Tonight we're all going back to our schools for evening interviews," and so on. That puts a tremendous strain on teachers who are already working a full day. They are teaching all day these days.

I think from that point of view, if only from the point of view of saying, "Hey, let's focus on instruction," five months makes a lot of sense.

Mr. Moore: It is easier to organize kindergarten and registering twice a year than coming in on their birthday, which is certainly a proposal that has been around.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have just one last thing, if I could, and then we can go on. I do not disagree with the notion of the block time being more effective and I certainly do not disagree with the time when kids come into this maybe being a leveller in terms of entry.

I guess my difficulty is looking at the present system and seeing, it seems to me, how variegated the approach is to promotion and to looking at how important the school year is in determining whether or not the child has made it in that school year, whether he must be retained or promoted.

That is interpreted so differently across the system that if we then move to a very clear notion of how we are going to move people, how we are going to promote them, whether it is on that semestered basis, especially for those new entries, are you going to say that a bunch of those can go straight into grade 1 because they have developed far enough after that first five-month block and so, in September, they will go in, and a bunch of them will be held back?

I just do not understand exactly how we start off with what is a kind of semestered system and then either move to an annualized basis for promotion or move back to some sort of semestered system. That is what I do not have clear in my mind in terms of what the effect is going to be, in organizational terms, of moving into almost full-blown semestering, because of the way the entry process is going to work, and then moving to much more of what the secondary model is.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: You could eliminate grades and this would work great.

Mr. Moore: Exactly.

Ms. Thornham: That is what we would like to see.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: In that kind of context, it does answer my concern, I think.

Mr. Moore: It would almost force that kind of move.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just had an experience in my riding last evening of a family coming in and talking about a grade 1 and a grade 2 being held back because, on the annualized basis, they were going to fail. I thought, my God, here we are in Scarborough and after all we have been through in terms of grade promotion and social promotion concepts and the idea of maybe dealing with kids on a divisional basis and that sort of thing, even in a place like Scarborough this was now—and then this individual school, at least, was being the norm. I just raise that in terms of that being so far away from that goal of getting rid of grades or blurring the grades a bit or whatever.

Mr. Jackson: I am very interested in the points you are making about multiple entry points in the primary division. Certainly the work of this committee in its previous session was hinting that this is an area we should be examining, for both ends of the spectrum: the student who is not prepared to enter kindergarten because the early identification process in a board indicates the child has not developed sufficiently to master kindergarten, so you could actually develop for those children that kind of program, and those who are at the other end of the spectrum, who are well in advance and prepared for school and would find kindergarten and grade 1 rather boring.

Also, it provides for multiple exit points, which is something we examined briefly and offered some discussion about for students who wish to enter the secondary school program in midterm.

That begs the question which I want to talk about. If we are prepared to look at bringing the elementary and secondary systems into closer alignment in terms of the principles of forward progress so that we would have multiple entry and exit points, that begs the question, at the end of the secondary school experience, about how well we have co-ordinated with the universities.

Throughout your excellent brief, your provocative recommendations imply–at least, I get a sense when reading them and listening to you–that we would create a sort of dysfunction with the university community if we were not careful. We have to be very careful about that.

The things that are zipping through my mind include the various points at which large groups of young people are put on the employment market, the effect that has and the interrelationship between high school students looking for pin money or future educational money and university students who are living hand to mouth for their income that summer. There are a lot of issues at stake with your recommendations.

That is a general comment, and then I would like to ask you some questions. You may want to respond to that.

Mr. McLachlin: I was just going to say we have that situation already. We have many students who go through secondary school, finish at the end of the semester in January and work until the fall. That is the type of thing you are talking about, is it not?

Mr. Jackson: But they do not have as severe an impact as, say, the fact that the university student can enter the job market faster. Under your proposal, I can see that the university and high school students will enter the job market at approximately the same time. That is a unique feature and a result of your recommendation, and I would want to analyse the impact of that. I would not want to put further difficulties in front of university-bound and university-returning students who are having difficulty meeting those expenses.

In terms of my questions, on each, you raise some important points here. You did not mention planning time, which I think is an element for elementary schools. The semestered approach might be more helpful, because planning time at the elementary level is inhibited by the way we structure programs in schools. There is a cogent argument to be made for increased planning time if we explore more fully your comments about that.

It also begs the question about how much is being loaded into a school day. You basically address that in your first point, that heritage language is an add-on at the end of the day if they want to utilize their extramural activities and so on. But we are seeing another significant trend developing which is the compression of that, the academic portion of their day. It just keeps getting smaller and smaller. Where do the headmasters of Ontario sit on that issue?

Most people assume that by making the school day a little bit longer, we will be able to do the many things that we as politicians are imposing on the system, everything from AIDS education to all the educational and social needs which we are looking to our schools to help address. We are the educational component. There is just so much integration that can be done on every social issue of the day.

1040

I am surprised that you have suggested it is already long enough, by virtue of the need for busing, by virtue of the need for heritage languages, but what about the compression internally?

Mr. Moore: I think that is something we have to work out, because the first priority is the good of the children. I do not think necessarily that by lengthening the time you spend with them you are increasing the quality of the time. I think there comes a point where there is a saturation and I think you have to make good use of the hours you have rather than make more hours to fill.

Ms. Thornham: I would just like to say that this is my 25th year in education and I do not see any reduction in academic work in the elementary schools in this province. I would be interested in the basis on which you make the comment, because while there is a lot more expected in terms of academics, and we all know that we never take anything away, I think we have always put a priority on that. In the schools I have been in in five boards in this province, I have not seen a reduction in academic time.

Further to what John was saying, I really believe that when we talk about young children, many of these kids are already putting in a longer day than their parents are. People do not recognize that. In my school, youngsters are dropped off at 7:30 in the morning and not picked up until 6:30 at night. That is 11 hours. We now have junior kindergarten, three- and four-year-olds, and I have 150 of them. There is no way you can start talking about making that day longer.

We are talking about education here, we are not talking about day care, and these are little wee children. I really think you are unrealistic if you are talking about making that day longer than it already is. The educational component of five hours is plenty, because as John pointed out, we are talking seven or seven and a half hours, just from the first bell until the end of the day.

Mr. Jackson: That is not always the norm which you are referencing. I certainly would not

want to build an entire provincial educational system around the difficulties of bus transportation and limited dollars for scheduling of buses in northern and extremely rural parts of this province.

My point is that in some schools, immediately adjacent to a school, you have to drive very carefully starting at three o'clock, because they have unloaded all the children on to the street. Then 15 minutes later, the parking lot for the staff is completely empty.

We have to have some balance in that in terms of that perspective, but we should be looking at–as this committee has had some insight into–the problem you have identified.

My question is, I do not want to address solely those cases. I may have misled you when I referenced academic activities. I am really talking about the compression of programs where these add-ons have occurred, so what constitutes an academic program? Yes, French immersion is an academic exercise, but it has entered our system at the expense of other programs, if you look at it a certain way. Special education demands: Yes, they are academic, but they have come into the system with a compression of emphasis in other areas.

We can both get into that argument if we clarify our definitions. I just wanted to suggest to you that with a clear statement, "The school day is long enough," not on the basis of academics but on the basis of busing and after-school programming like heritage languages, then I see that there is room for some flexibility there that I was not actually seeing in the report.

I would like to ask more questions, Madam Chairman, but I know you have a long list. I will just suggest to you that in number 5, you should add that the collective bargaining process should also mirror the financing and budgeting and school year. All three elements should align, and I am sure you meant that.

Mr. Moore: Yes. Could I just make reference back to number 1? You will notice I was careful not to say "the school day"; I said "the instructional day." I think there are a lot of schools, as in Sue's case, where the day is much longer than the instructional day. I am thinking of the formal instruction of five hours. I know my school yesterday ran from eight in the morning until eight at night. That is not necessarily common, but eight in the morning until five or 5:30 p.m. is very common. I am talking about the formal, five-hour instructional day being maintained.

Miss Nicholas: I really like the idea of the multiple-entry-point system and, perhaps for a less sophisticated reason, some of the others. I know children who have had a sickness and who perhaps have missed a couple of months of the year have lost a whole year, which would not have happened in the high school system, because it goes by blocks of time. I like the age group, but perhaps I can follow a different line of questioning.

I am intrigued by this five-month grouping and concerned that you are suggesting going to school in August and moving the summer to June and July. I remember as a student that those were always the best months of our year and it was an opportunity to get outside, see the world and see your friends, whereas our winter months really preclude our doing that.

Mr. Mahoney: And swim in the lake?

Miss Nicholas: Swim in the lake. Some of my best swims were in August. I wonder if taking a three-week break during January is the time; unless families are wealthy enough to get away, they are then confined to their homes. There are recreational programs, but it is very difficult to get out and perhaps run off the energy that one has when one is not going to school. So I have that concern in terms of the shifting of the three weeks to January. It would be fine if we could all go to Florida.

The second one perhaps is the burnout question, both for the teacher and for the student. Have you done anything that satisfies you that students and teachers can work for five months without a break other than weekends? I know when a lot of people see March after the winter months, they are looking for a week off just as a relief. I wonder if maybe we are not giving that time to sort of just take a deep breath, rejuvenate and come back with full force. So those are the two concerns I have with that block.

Mr. Moore: Just a couple of responses there. Traditionally, the weather was so that all of July and August were the good months, and in recent years, it seems to be that June and July have much better weather. I do not know whether my students do or not, but a lot of children do go south for the winter and do ski a lot. We thought that having that winter break tied on to Christmas did leave the option both of some winter activities, and if you did want to go away, then it was a time that would be available to all.

But we really run six months from January to June now with the only holiday being that one week. I do not see five months. In each case you have a holiday weekend such as Thanksgiving,

Labour Day, Easter or maybe Heritage Day. So you have a break time of a day or two within each of the five-month blocks.

Miss Nicholas: You do not think that the parents–I know I need a break right now. The tendency would be to pull your children out anyway and go away for that week and find a week. Maybe the travel companies will not like it, because they cannot raise the prices for the week and make it difficult to go away. But I just wonder if we all need that week some time between the months of February and April.

Mr. Moore: There is certainly less of that happening now in the high schools with the semester, because missing a week is so much time. I moved a student from grade 8 into high school at the start of the second semester, and it was sort of an oddball thing to do, whereas with this system it would be much more common, as was suggested over here, that students could go into that second semester.

Miss Nicholas: And you think that five months straight is no problem for teachers either? I wonder if they need that time to regroup too.

Mr. Moore: We are not going to be increasing the hours. We are not really increasing their working times.

Mr. McLachlin: I tend to think it is a long time.

Miss Nicholas: Just without a break. I am sorry, I think that is an awfully long time.

Mr. McLachlin: We have discussed it among ourselves. We are not absolutely unanimous on no break in the middle. We think there should be something maybe closely tied in to the idea of a winter break, at least a four-day weekend someplace along the line, because you do need a break. Teachers are down now and kids are down right now.

Miss Nicholas: It gives me the feeling that we had Heritage Day in February because there was a feeling that there was a need for a long weekend in there and there was not a natural long weekend so we made one or we added in a holiday for that reason because it was a long way to Easter. Anyway, thank you.

Madam Chairman: I can see one of the recommendations of our committee going back to that 15-year-old controversy of whether there should be a national holiday in February, so you may have sparked some interesting thoughts on that line. Mr. Cooke?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: One of the things that happens there is that MPPs tend to get calls in August, September and earlier from parents of kids who want to get into kindergarten, and their birthdays are at the beginning of January so they do not get in. Your proposal of the two five-month semesters sounds as though that would be resolved and that students could come in in January. I guess the question I have is whether that is desirable. Currently those students, as you know, stay out for an additional year. My own opinion is that it does not hurt them at all, and in some cases, it probably is quite helpful.

1050

Mr. Moore: I guess it depends on the student. We were perceiving a thrust to have a much more open entry even to the point of birthday, as some countries do. That I think would create some nightmares of organization and so on. This appeared to be an alternative that would address that without opening it wide open.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: If we did this and a student could start in January, then tell me how that child who starts kindergarten in January would proceed along, not in the kind of system without grades that I think you would like to see and that I certainly would like to see, but given the circumstances as they are in Ontario now with grades and in-and-outs at certain times. How would that student move along? Would it mean the student would be in kindergarten for a year and a half or become bored?

Mr. McLachlin: It could mean either of those. It could mean that after the first five months they could move on into a grade 1 program, depending on their maturity; it could mean they might spend their traditional year, 10 months, or it might mean, as you say, a year and a half. On the other hand, they are not failing in the sense we talk of failing. Someone here this morning mentioned failing grade 1. It is an extension of that time.

They could move through that program, even with a graded program, in five-month blocks, some clusters anyway–not the whole mass group, because in any primary classroom you are going to find that teachers have three groups, depending on their ability levels.

One of the difficulties with the present entry program is that we have kids who were born in January going to school at the same time as kids who were born in December. They are really almost a year apart in age chronologically and are much faster to advance.

We find, as you are aware already, I am sure, that the kids who are born in December, particularly boys, tend to have considerable

difficulty in school and our special education classes and so on reflect that.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Do you think the system is sufficiently flexible now that if a student came in in January, there would actually be that type of decision at the end of June that, "Yes, the student should go into grade 1 and next year in September we will be able to spend enough time with that student"?

He might be just a little bit less developed than the student who has been in kindergarten for the full year or if the student stayed and made the move in the following January, in the middle of the school year, it might be the other kids in grade 1. Are we sufficiently staffed and individualistic enough to actually deal with that student coming in at a different time?

Mr. McLachlin: I think in our system we are. I cannot speak for other systems, but I am sure that in our system we are.

Ms. Thornham: You have to remember that the grade 1s are also in five-month chunks, so it is different. You are sort of implying that the kindergartens will be in five-month chunks, but the grade 1s are still in 10-month chunks. That is not accurate because they will all be in five-month chunks. It might be that the norm is that children come in and do two five-month kindergarten chunks. That is the norm.

We currently can accelerate children out of a junior kindergarten into grade 1 or whatever at any point. We do not do it often, but it certainly is done, so the flexibility is there currently, just as sometimes we have children who take four years to complete a primary chunk which ordinarily would take three years.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: If the flexibility is there currently and it does not happen very often, why does it not happen very often? One of my concerns with any system is that once a decision is made on how a school year is going to be organized and everybody automatically assumes that is how the school year is organized–that if Johnny comes in in January he will stay there until the next January–the flexibility that exists is not very often utilized because it is a big system and it does not happen. If the flexibility is there now and it does not get utilized, why would it be utilized under two five-month chunks?

Mr. Moore: Part of the problem is that the flexibility is there now, but it is chunked off in about three months, chunked off in about three sections, so you are really talking about three months. Three months is not time to go on or is not time to make your start. I think five months would be a more realistic time to spend in kindergarten if you are capable of going on, rather than the three chunks that we have now.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Just briefly on professional activity days, tell me exactly what you mean, in point 3, about "one day per instructional month to update program changes and pupil needs." What would the focus be of professional development days under your proposal?

Mr. Moore: I think there would be two focuses. One would be around new programs, new instructional methods that are available and workshop-type things. I think the other thing we were looking at was the increasing role of services we are relating with, the children's aid society and those kinds of services, which we somehow seem to have to meet with between nine and three. If you knew that within this four-week block there was going to be some time, many of those things could be scheduled into a day like that.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Cooke, would you mind if we went on–we have two more speakers and five minutes–unless you have a brief comment?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I have just one short question. I would like to talk about PA days for a long time, because I do not think they are adequately used by the profession.

Mr. Moore: Probably not, no.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Do boards put an adequate amount of money in for PD days and proper professional development? Is that one of the major problems?

Ms. Thornham: Can I respond to that? That is a particular interest of mine. I believe that the PD activities should be school-based. All of the research indicates that is where the growth occurs for teachers and so on. If that is the case, then they should be evenly distributed through the year, because principals and other resource people they choose to bring in–five days at the end of June is not very helpful if you have got 10 or 12 teachers who are going to another school in the fall.

Really, what you want to do is to be able to have an ongoing growth program for your staff, so that you know you have got this amount of time available. That is what we are lacking. As principals, we have all kinds of expectations laid on us about what we are supposed to help teachers do. We have very little time, period, to do it.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I have always found it strange the way PD days are organized in a lot of

schools now. They are crunched at the beginning of September, so that a kid goes to school for the first day and then the next thing he knows he is off on PD days for several days. Then he gets a big chunk. They are all around weekends. Then the next big chunk is at the end of the school year. It is no wonder that a lot of parents feel PD days are holidays.

Ms. Thornham: I agree with you. I think there is a lot better way of doing it, but we have not had the option to do that. I believe they should be school-based and consistently spread through the school year. If indeed you want us as principals to work with our staffs, that is what we need.

Mr. Mahoney: PD days are like when the Legislature rises and they think we are on holidays. Sitting here, we all know that is not true.

Mr. Ballinger: So you say.

Mr. Mahoney: Well, I know where you are going.

I agree with the comments, though, about the PD days from Mr. Cooke. Many of my other issues were covered as well, but let me just ask you how broad you have gone with this position. Is it, first of all, endorsed officially by your association and have you taken it to trustees, parents and kids?

Mr. Moore: It was in fact written by the executive of the Ontario Principals' Association and discussed by it. That has been the extent of it.

Mr. Mahoney: Do you have any plans to broaden that discussion, to see if there is indeed a consensus?

Mr. Moore: We had not at this point. It was prepared in response to a presentation here.

Mr. Mahoney: I have a brief comment; I know you want to get on with the rest of the questioners. Some of the issues that come out when you talk about year-round education are similar, such as the idea of the problems with tradition, the lifestyles. I agree with my colleague, the member for Scarborough Centre (Miss Nicholas) about the problems. I do not think we can assume today that kids can go skiing and on winter vacation in the south. Even by today's rather wonderful standards, in my view, those are not realistic perceptions of where people vacation.

We could end up creating a situation where the kids are off and they are literally stuck in the house at home, because mom and dad certainly cannot afford a trip to Florida or even a trip to Collingwood. I would be a little concerned about taking our inexpensive vacation periods away and putting an additional burden on parents who can least afford it. I think our experience would indicate that those kids from the lower social ladder, shall we say, or lower financial ladder are the ones who tend to drop out quicker. I wonder if doing that might exacerbate that problem.

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Mr. Moore: We really have not changed the number of holidays you have in each period. You have June and July instead of July and August and you have a week at the beginning of January instead of March, so you really have not changed the actual time of holidays in each season; you have simply relocated them a little bit.

Mr. Mahoney: I just, I guess, throw those comments out. The old question simply is, do you think the system is broken and do we really need to do radical surgery? Obviously any change, whether you go to two five-month periods, the trimester, year-round or whatever you do, is really considered fairly radical surgery, maybe not by certain professionals in the business but, I suspect, by the parents. Is the system broken enough to make such a change?

Mr. Moore: No, I do not think it is broken. It was not our intent to say it is broken; it was an attempt to modify it that we thought would be better for children, and we thought was a modification rather than surgery.

Mr. Adams: If I pass, could you put me high on the list for the next round, please?

Madam Chairman: How about at the very top of the list?

Mr. Adams: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Ontario Principals' Association for your usual valuable contribution to our committee. You have certainly started us off with some very stimulating ideas. We appreciate that. We very much appreciated having your guest from China and we hope she enjoys the balance of her stay in Canada.

Our next presentation is by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. We welcome back Walter Pitman. We look forward to hearing your comments this morning.

WALTER G. PITMAN

Mr. Pitman: I do want to reiterate again that I do not speak for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I speak for myself, however, and I am very pleased indeed to be here once again.

My first words must be words of congratulation. I think the first report that you produced has

made a considerable impact on this province. For one thing, I think you have derailed what I refer to as the back-to-Beulah-land view of education. You have, I think, ended the nostalgic return to the 1950s perhaps signalled by the Radwanski report. For that, I for one thank you.

Mr. Ballinger: George has not recovered yet.

Mr. Pitman: Well, you have signalled a number of important areas of concern, particularly the role of women in our society. If we are competing in the global economy and human resources are our main resource in doing so, it is the misuse of women which I think is our first stage in getting into that whole area. You have registered your commitment to equality of opportunity, and by that I mean real equality of opportunity.

You have shown sensitivity to details of school experience. I think that was the surprising thing about your report. You obviously listened to teachers. You realized that the important thing is teacher time with students and that teacher exchanges across the system are very important. I guess most of all you signalled the paramountcy of the teacher in terms of the respect and the nurturing of teachers, all these things–you may say the care and feeding of the profession–and I think that was a great step forward from many reports that have been written in the last number of years.

I think you identified the areas of OSIS that have given greatest concern and you have also shown that you cannot stop a process in midstream. I think your signalling of those concerns, indicating the need to carry on with OSIS but also some areas of revision and the need for research in determining where in fact those changes should be made, was very helpful.

Finally, I think you impressed all teachers, principals and administrators by the recognition of the complexity of the educational system. It was not a report filled with simplistic solutions, and so I say thank you from all of us who have been concerned with the educational system. You have done a great service.

You have decided now to turn your attention to the school day and the school year. I am not going to be very helpful to you this morning in terms of coming up with an easy solution. There are all kinds of patterns you could find that are in place in different countries of the world, whether you go to the United Kingdom or whether you go to European countries.

One of the things you must be aware of is that it is probably the most impervious thing to change that you have in our educational system. All of us around this table went to school at nine o'clock in the morning and we largely finished at 3:30 in the afternoon. That was, in some cases, 40 years ago; in some cases, 50 years ago. And yet, we are still doing it in 1989. We still essentially go to school in the fall, winter, early spring and have a holiday in the summer. That has been going on for centuries now, as long as schools have been around in this country.

The irony is that we have learned so much about learning and how it goes on and yet we do so little about the whole question of time. Is it not incredible that we bring young children of six and seven to school at nine o'clock in the morning and leave them there until 3:30 or four o'clock in the afternoon and they come at the same time when they are 16 or 17 or 18 and leave about the same time?

Everything we know about children, just from our own families, would tell us that the learning patterns and the learning time and the learning readinesses are different for different age groups. Yet, as I say, the whole question of the school day and the school year seems to be carved in stone somewhere as it relates to this jurisdiction.

The first obvious comment is that schooling seems to have so much to do with custodial care. We know that if we change there would be an outcry not so much from people who care about learning as from those who care about somebody looking after their kids. It would be marvellous if this committee could take a look and separate what could be called the custodial care or the child care– I do not say that in a deprecating way; I do not call it baby-sitting, because it is not; I am not in any way deprecating that role. It might well be a tremendous advantage to the educational system if we could separate what is going on in the area of learning, how much learning goes on in a normal school day, in a normal school year, and how much we are really involved in keeping kids for our society so that our society can get on about its business.

Of course, this has been even more increased and intensified as we have moved more and more to both parents at work. I am not suggesting that either spouse should stop working. All I am suggesting is that we need to look at it in the context of a different world.

You will be hearing over the next number of days and weeks, I suspect, about the need for change. I noticed this morning and was delighted to see that the committee put its attention not to school busing or not to what we call the administrative needs of the schooling system but

rather to learning, the pedagogical imperatives of learning.

Certainly, you are going to be told that in secondary schools with a semestering system, it is simply lunatic to have the semester end at the end of January and then everybody change gears over a weekend, come back and start the second semester sometime in early February.

You are certainly going to hear about the possibilities of reducing capital costs and that is going to be very seductive. As you well know, they have infused 33,000 children into the Los Angeles schooling system without putting up a single structure simply by running a 12-month school year. You can add 50 per cent to any one school by simply manipulating time and space.

That will be, as I say, very seductive, because of course in education we so often find that the students are not where the schools are built. We build the schools and then of course those areas tend to become older communities; then the areas in Peel, Pickering, Durham are exploding at the same time as we have empty school rooms somewhere else. This is an enormous cost to the public purse.

You are going to learn a great deal about the tourism industry and the needs of business. I might say that I am not one of those who believe that we should be overly concerned with the fact that young people do work in the private sector. I think a great deal of learning does take place, even in McDonald's. I do not agree that we should be preoccupied with that aspect of the young people's lifestyles.

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Of course, you are going to hear from parents who would prefer the school day to be lengthened to five o'clock so we do not have the latchkey problem; that every young person be left in the school until five and then possibly get home at about 5:30 p.m. when their parents do. I guess the question I have to ask, and hope and pray that you concern yourself about is: Are these questions educational or are we once again talking about custodial care and the economics of education?

It behooves us once in a while to look at a bit of research. It is interesting that we are preoccupied with this linkage of time and learning. Yet we have had experiences where there have been strikes in certain jurisdictions for three, four, five and six weeks, and when they have tested young people–

Mr. Adams: It has had no effect at all.

Mr. Pitman: That was exactly the point I was going to make. Dr. Adams brings up the very point that when students were tested not that long after the strike, there was no real difference in the capacity of the students who had been involved in the strike and those who had not. There was no lasting educational effect. That is not suggesting that we should not send children to school at all, but I think it does suggest that we should not be overly preoccupied with this question. So often we do tend to think that time in school equals learning.

Right now there is a great movement in the United States–they are also concerned with competing in the global economy–to extend the number of days in the year. Of course, there has been great attention given to the Japanese educational system and to other educational systems. I think one has to question that assumption, that by keeping young people till five o'clock or having them come to school on Saturday we are going to make a great leap forward in the knowledge of young people.

One of the things I think this committee has to be very careful of is the international tests and the assumptions that are drawn from them, whether they be of science or of mathematics. You have seen them all and you have seen them in the Premier's Council. One can really ask what they are testing and who they are testing. The most simple question I always ask is: How many children leaving a Japanese classroom have Japanese as a second language? I wonder how many of them are dealing with all the great breadth of educational and social experience which our young people are having in our schools.

Any suggestion that the school system is not as good as it was 20 years ago–and here I am talking about the independent schools as well as the public school system–is just so unfair and really quite ridiculous and perhaps should not be taken seriously at all.

As I say, the assumption is that time in school equals learning. The other thing, of course, is that learning goes on for two- or three-hour stints in classrooms filled with 30 young people. We have not put enough attention to what is the whole concept of quality moments of learning, quality time in those classrooms. I hope this committee, after it has turned its attention to this whole business of the length of the school day and school year, will turn its attention to how we deal with quality of curriculum and quality of teaching, now that you have dealt with OSIS and all the questions of administration.

One of the things we think about schools of course is that schools will solve so many of our

problems. We think of institutionalization of young people from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. as the solution. I suggest that we could probably spend our money much more effectively in the early years in what we do with families. There is the degree to which we make a family into an educational institution, that we make books available and advice on television programs that children could be seeing, all of the things that go on in libraries, in concert halls and on stages, everything going on in that community and in the recreational sector of our society.

Heaven only knows, you might say that we need to reconstitute our perception of what sport is all about after what has taken place over the last two weeks in this country. Indeed, I think that is extremely important.

I think we overestimate time in school at our peril, if we underestimate the importance of the family, the community and all the educational elements that exist in that community, because it is outside the school that those young people are going to learn that their education is a life-long experience, that they have to cope with learning throughout their lives, in terms of being parents, being workers and certainly being citizens.

The other thing I would like you to consider about the length of the school day and the length of the school year is a question which came up in the last session. Those things that you signalled in your first report will demand renewal as well as extended preparation of teachers. You were so right in putting your attention on teachers and on teaching of what goes on in that interaction. I do not mean teachers talking to kids. I mean teachers interacting and allowing learning to take place in a context with young people. I think that is something that can only be done when we renew and allow the renewal of teachers.

I have often thought that so much of the quality moments I spoke of a moment ago could be dealt with if we get time to motivate, to inspire and to transform. If we could get away from transmission to transformation throughout our whole educational system, we would be making an enormous leap. But the point with teachers is that I think they need time and, as I said the last time, not single professional development days. They need extended periods. Things do not change in two or three hours sitting in the school gymnasium. Things can change if there is time for that kind of interaction. I think that should be very much a part of your concern; that is, that we concern ourselves with education as quality, not simply as time spent.

I would hope that in taking a look at this whole question you might dare to suggest some extraordinary solutions; dare to question compulsory education. Do we really need to compel children to come to school at any age? That is the irony of the dropout. We are now discovering that a great many of the dropouts may be forced out or, more important, they may be dropout/dropins. They may just be taking time out. We are finding that 30 per cent, 40 per cent and maybe 50 per cent in some areas are dropping back in after they have been out for a short time. The irony, of course, is that the school system ignores them once they have dropped out of the school role.

One country has already said: "Compulsory education? There is no such thing as compulsory education. There is compulsory attendance." Sometimes the compulsory attendance is the worst possible thing that could be happening to that young person at a certain point in age. In many ways, the teenage period is not the easiest time to teach to and to learn in. I think that we might want to think about what at least one other country has turned to. Dare we question that?

Dare we offer opportunities to school boards by giving grants perhaps on the basis of ways of determining resources needed other than simply the young people sitting in school classrooms from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. or 4 p.m. for so many days a year? That is really the only role, in many ways, that the provincial government has in what takes place in a school: the grant system. Would that there be a way of freeing up that grant system to give at least some local school boards– The need for pilot projects is very great. That might be one way that you could really quite dramatically change the way that school boards look at education. Indeed, possibly there could even be grants for every young person in the community, perhaps for every person, even adults who are in the community, as opposed to just attendance at school for certain periods for so many days.

That is really the industrial system at its best, which the school of course is a cause or product of. The school is indeed a factory as it is set up. What we have to do is deal with a post-industrial society. Teaching people to deal with time in a post-industrial society is very different from teaching them how to deal with time in a society in which they are turning up at an industrial plant at nine o'clock when they begin work and being disciplined and all the things that we know about that relate to that old society.

Finally, could we dare to encourage a very broad use of resources for wider programming

outside the classroom for the use of the community: endorsing co-operative education and celebrating co-operative education so that young people can secure credits for things they do outside the classroom?

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Could we even think about the possibility of structuring our workforce, you might say, not just with teachers, who need more time, and not just with classroom volunteers, and they are very important, but perhaps we have lower levels of individuals who can give young people experiences in the area of recreation, learning about their bodies and learning about how to move and learning to be responsible for their health, who can teach them something about the arts and the extraordinary spiritual and intellectual experiences they can have throughout their lives in those areas? Perhaps that can be done at other levels.

We are so tied to the teachers. It is very much like the hospital tied to the doctor. I think we need all this kind of liberation.

I think one of the things that is not liberating, one of the things that you are caught up in is, of course, the century-old tradition of the nine-to-four school day.

I think that would encourage boards to arrange their holiday time in the best interests of those who are learning, those who are students, not just those who are administrators and not just those who are paying the bills. It may very well be that in some parts of Ontario it would be advantageous to recognize the hunting season, to recognize farming, but also to recognize what it is like to be in Toronto in June as opposed to August, which may even be cooler. I think there is a great field of opportunity for imagination and creativity in this area of the school day and the school year.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Pitman. As usual, your comments have been very insightful. I would also like to thank you for your very kind commendation of the first report of the select committee on education. We did try to be sensitive and to listen, as opposed to just making a report.

Personally, I think the point at which I realized we may have achieved a sensitive balance was when we were roundly condemned by one teachers' federation for going too far on streaming and the next day roundly condemned by yet another teachers' federation for not going far enough.

Mr. Pitman: You know you are right.

Mr. Mahoney: Nobody is happy; you are right.

Madam Chairman: That was our first inclination that we were on the right track.

Mr. Adams: I would like to welcome the former member for Peterborough back to the committee.

Mr. Ballinger: Wait a minute. There are no plugs here.

Mr. Adams: If we are plugging Peterborough, I think, once again, there are four people here associated with Trent University.

If I could share with the committee an occasion when Walter Pitman was the member for Peterborough and he was speaking to a group–I think it was a group of bankers; I forget–in Peterborough, a part of his speech was a mock election address of a school board trustee. There was a line in it–and it was a mock address–which said something like, "What we need are more little red schoolhouses with plenty of good, clean toilets." He received a standing ovation from the people assembled.

After it, I remember him coming to me and he said–and I was associated in politics in a slightly different capacity then–"Peter, never be subtle on a political platform."

I was pleased to see that now he no longer has these constraints and he is very subtle. Walter, I appreciated your remarks.

I would like you to talk again, though, about this business that time in school is not equal to learning. Specifically, we have been given figures about the school year in Japan, and it is not a slight difference we are talking about. If you work it out from the figures we have, their kids are in school 10, 11, possibly 12 weeks more, and if you factor in that they are in school for 20 per cent longer each day or so, you end up with those kids in school 13- to 14-month years by our standards. It is a huge difference.

You happened to mention Japan in what you said, and its circumstances are very different from ours, but surely there is food for thought in a difference as large as that.

Mr. Pitman: Yes, there is, and I think we should be very careful. We think we can reconstruct the Japanese society in Ontario. I think there are so many societal differences, so many differences of opportunities for learning outside the school in this country as compared to what there are in Japan.

Also, we are learning a great deal of the negative side of the schooling experience for the Japanese. Anyone who has examined what

happens to the Japanese kids as they leave the school and try to go on to post-secondary education and the exploitation of these kids in terms of bringing them up to a standard to be able to pass examinations, because their lives are ended–I do not want to exaggerate, and I am, I am sure. It is far more a concentration of learning.

Besides that, I guess the question is, what do we want to see as the end product? I am not sure that I want to see young people in schools, especially in a country like this, over extended periods of time, when in fact I think they can learn so much more. The Japanese have a very different concept of learning and what is legitimate learning. We have now learned a great deal more about how to be operative and effective people, which involves so much more of what goes on in the community and in all these other interactions.

I guess I would say that, after taking a look at the lifestyle and the workstyle and the values, I would opt for a schooling system that exudes democratic values and exudes a perception of the whole person, which I do not think the Japanese have been able to achieve.

It is true, so far as economics is concerned, they have been able to do that. Here again–I said this the last time–I do not think we should try to solve the problem of competing in the global economy in the elementary and secondary schools. I think it is the post-secondary area where the real needs are, and we have talked about this many times, both of us. I think that is where the real issue is.

I would hate to see us get into a preoccupation with extending school days and school years just on the basis of "Now we can compete with Japan." For example, if you want a real difference of time, the Japanese worker gets 200 hours of training for two hours, average, of a Canadian worker. That is where the real time difference is in terms of the work station and the quality of work we can expect. I think that is where the attention needs to be given.

Mr. Adams: It seems to me that one of the big changes in the last couple of decades is the fact that in two out of three families with school-age children now, both parents work. Somehow or other, I suggest, the schools should adjust to that. I am just keeping to this point of length of school day and length of school year. You mentioned the scope for education in the family and in the community in general, and you made a remark about McDonald's. My son was fired from a McDonald's and I was never more proud of him. It was an excellent learning experience.

It does seem to me that perhaps the length of the school day should adjust in some way, not just the child care aspect, but the simple fact that these kids are not in school either because the school year is very short or the number of hours of the day is short, and they go home to a different environment than was the case 20 years ago.

How do we adjust to that? You mentioned sustaining the family. But if in fact for a couple of hours, or for these six weeks that these Japanese kids are still in school, our kids are based in a home where there are no parents, how do we cope with that?

Mr. Pitman: Regarding the question of extending the school day, it might be extending the day; it may not be the classroom day. In other words, I would like to see far more attention being given not to competitive sports but to recreational sports. This is where independent schools make an enormous difference in the attention they give to that aspect.

I would like to see far more time given to the arts, whether it be visual arts or drama and all these things. In other words, it might very well be a wonderful recommendation to extend the day, but it may not be the teacher day or the classroom day. This simply may be the time that young people are engaged in various activities.

I question whether you can expect quality learning over such a long period. We do not expect it at the post-secondary level. If a student has three or four hours of classes and laboratories, we think that is pretty intense. I think that just extending time in a classroom is not the solution, but it might very well be extending the time the schooling system takes responsibility for the development of young people. That may make sense.

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Madam Chairman: That is quite an interesting concept of extending the school day to cover maybe nonacademic pursuits such as noncompetitive sports or even competitive sports. That has been raised by a number of people in private conversations that I have had, where they have suggested that we could be fulfilling our mandate as an education system for things like Participaction by having those credit courses at the end of the school day, perhaps in music, art and other subjects which today are not getting as much attention as people would like them to get.

Mr. Pitman: One of the things we could do is extend that time in terms of service, teaching

young people to serve their communities. Somehow or other, we have to get young people to realize that they live in a very different world than their parents did and the horror that we have of inequality in terms of economics around this world. If there is one thing that every child has to learn, it is that he has to make a contribution.

The state of Africa and the poorer countries right now and the effects of the International Monetary Fund and the banks, to me, are an obscenity in terms of our standard of living and theirs. Somehow or other, that is one of the lessons which we have to teach young people. I think it perhaps can only be taught out in the community. I do not think everything can be taught in the school.

And if there is one thing young people are aware of now, it is that they may not survive in the 21st century unless we do something about the quality of the environment. I think that is maybe something that can be taught out in the community.

It may be, as I say, extending the day, but it may not be of the classroom day or the school day, and certainly not expecting teachers, thereby, to extend their days and to be responsible for, in some cases in the secondary schools, 200 kids over seven or eight hours. It is just unconscionable. It is impossible for quality.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Walter, you are, as usual, very provocative in these kinds of issues, and I have a great deal of empathy for where you are coming from. I really wonder about our topic, actually, in terms of this notion of dealing with the structure particularly and not so much the content of the school day and whether perhaps our focus is a little off on this.

My major question, however, which I will start off with, is around the practicality of what you are talking about, given the vested interests out there and the nature of the education system in general in terms of its rigidity and the hierarchy that is there at the present time.

The principals who were in just before you probably feel they have gone a fair way to even offering some change via the structure they presented to us today, and yet they would be–I would not speak for them–terrified of some of the notions that are involved in what you are suggesting. I just wonder how you see that as actually being attainable.

Mr. Pitman: I think there are win-win situations. I think, for example, that would be a win for teachers who were presented with an opportunity to teach less and teach better, to be more nurtured and prepared.

I think there are other levels. Right now, for example, we have a possibility of a teacher shortage. This is not going to solve the teacher shortage, but we would certainly not necessarily use teachers for that kind of recreation. We might have other ways of teaching recreation and arts and all these things and not use the high-level, high-cost teacher as the main purveyor of that particular service.

I think the cost of schooling, of the institutionalization, is enormous, but the cost of learning in the community and the cost of seeing it as an extension throughout a lifetime is cost-effective. I think there are a number of elements that actually save money. It is not simply a loading on and more and more of the same.

I think the costs of extending the school day as a classroom day and extending another six weeks to the year will be horrendous. I think these other modifications are much less threatening and more practical.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It might seem to be mildly tangential here, but it seems there could be a connection between what you are saying in terms of involving other people outside of the profession's control or the classroom, the classroom being the location for learning, and the notion of parental control and community involvement in the school and a change in terms of how we look at things in terms of, again, the structure of boards of education and that kind of hierarchy, from the superintendents down through to the principals–which we have presently, which I see as a system that is very hard to move–to a system where there is more localized neighbourhood control and that kind of thing.

Mr. Pitman: I think involving the family in education means involving the parents in the school, as well. Mr. Adams talked about the whole question that there is so little time that parents have. If we can make it into quality time, as opposed to TV time or TV violence time, then I think we have made a major achievement. I think there are many ways we can involve parents.

We have tended to isolate the schools. That happened particularly during the 1960s. That goes back to the little red schoolhouse in the neighbourhood, where you did have, in fact, a Christmas pageant in the schoolroom. Now the school is seen as something that parents get very uncomfortable with. We just have to see it as a community. The school can no longer be held to the time problems of the janitor. We just simply have to make the school an open institution where people can use the gymnasium, they can

use the computers and they can use the library. All these things have to be far more a part of the community emphasis, as a learning asset.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one final thing that may seem to be going even further on the tangent. What is the connection between that kind of philosophical approach and change and things like popular education theory, as opposed to our present notions of curriculum development, etc.?

Mr. Pitman: I am not sure I can answer that question. I am not sure I know enough about popular education theory. My sense is that we are moving towards a school in which young people learn how to learn, how to become curious and learn literacies which include reading but also include artistic literacy and socioeconomic literacy–those things, as opposed to education as trivial pursuit, as finding out a lot of detail and information about things which are somewhat irrelevant. It seems to me that the community can be very helpful in developing those kinds of skills.

Mr. Beer: One of the issues I was thinking about, and Mr. Johnston raised it, is that when we get into talking about how we can change the nature of the school year, and particularly look at the program and the actual educational worth of the program–the learning opportunities, as Mr. Johnston says–there is a structure there that has been in place for a long time. The question is, to what extent can you move that structure to allow for some of these things to happen?

I think it is sometimes useful to look at some proposals that are coming forward, some innovative work that is being done. Perhaps we are being able to see some changes within individual board jurisdictions. Perhaps what we might want to look at as a committee is where some of those things are happening and get behind them.

Let me give just a couple of examples in terms of projects that it would seem to me kids really respond to. A couple of weeks ago I was in London. It was a conference of Energy Educators of Ontario, elementary and secondary school-teachers. I met a couple of teachers who I think were with either the Board of Education for the City of London or the Middlesex County Board of Education. They had developed a proposal on the semester system whereby a number of students could go to the outdoor education program for a semester. The four programs they would take would be environmental science, geography and physical education, as well as outdoor education, which may have been there as a topic.

I forget exactly how they wove it together, but it describes the nature of the program. A lot of it was some of the themes you were mentioning. It also involved the students taking on a great deal of responsibility for the program while they were doing it, because of where the program would be delivered.

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They had not started this, but this was a proposal they were working on, and I think it was very innovative. Any of us who have taught in the classroom could think of any number of students who would respond to that kind of initiative. As a learning process, it would be tremendous.

In the same context, I think back to when the Toronto boards started their science school on the Islands. I knew some friends who taught there and kids of friends who participated. That went far beyond just being a science school. It became so much more, and I think for everybody involved in that project, it was a tremendous learning experience with a very different kind of school-day/school-year context.

We spoke of some other things in terms of extracurricular activities as learning activities. I look at the school day, and if there are things I would like to see in terms of an extended school day, it is allowing more opportunity for a whole variety of activities, whether it is debating, which some students love and want to do, either recreationally or competitively; you mentioned the arts; recreational sports; and again, this whole question of service to the community, which may happen and does happen in some schools, but largely because of individual teachers or perhaps somebody has brought the Duke of Edinburgh program into their school, that kind of thing. It is not really seen as something the schools or the students ought to be doing as part of an overall program.

That is by way of comment, which in a sense does not speak to the structural or administrative aspects of lengthening the school year or the school day, but these are ways of making changes to the program which might have definite implications for both the school day and the school year but where learning is taking place. I think you are very right in reminding us that "There may be some administrative and financial reasons why we should be looking at a different school year and a different school day, and by all means look at those, but do not forget that the key and critical thing is the learning process."

Are you aware of to what extent OISE has done any particular studies on some of these different programs that boards have done that are, in effect, taking kids out of the school as we know it, out of the classroom, and has tried to assess the kind of learning impact of some of these different kinds of activities and how the students have reacted to those?

Mr. Pitman: Yes, there are examples. I can tell you that one that I was personally involved in in Peterborough many years ago was to take kids out of grade 12 and into the community for half time, working with retarded children, working with older people, working in the various social services. That program went around to a number of boards.

I think the point you are making is absolutely right. Because we have tended to focus on the school day and the school classroom, we have not been as open to these kinds of opportunities as we should have been, either in terms of doing them, as you suggested, or of researching them, as I think we should have been at OISE. We probably reflect to a large extent the preoccupation that the schooling systems have. In fact, we do the research that we are asked to do by boards or by the Ministry of Education. So we tend to get into those areas where the action is already seen to be legitimate and to be going on.

I am sure there is material we could put you in touch with, but there may not be as much as there should be. There certainly will not be an overall global picture.

Mr. Beer: The other question would relate in a sense to changes we are bringing about to teacher education and how we are making new teachers perhaps more aware of different kinds of elements such as this in developing their own programs as they finally go out into a school. I know OISE has been very involved in trying to bring about changes in programs and so on, but what is your sense of where we are in some of those?

Mr. Pitman: My sense is that we are going to have some very tough and difficult decisions to make in the next short while. As you know, there is a major teacher shortage, as you have learned in the Legislature.

We have just gone through a process over the last three or four years of working through a teacher education program, which began as a research project of Michael Fullan and Michael Connelly at OISE and then went through a committee process and now it is all ready to move, which would extend in time the teacher preparation and indeed would create a year of activity in the school board before the person would be a full-time, fully operative teacher.

Now, of course, we are in the situation where it is going to be very seductive to move into short-term summer-course kind of activity, or even to do what Great Britain has done, which is simply to take people into the classroom without any preparation at all and just let them sort of survive on the support system of the school. Those are the kinds of solutions that are coming forward now.

It is ironic that just at the moment that we have finished a very long and distended process of looking at teacher education and we have decided that it needed to be certainly broader, much more experiential and longer term, we are now faced with the short-term realities of staffing the classrooms.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Pitman, for your usual insightful comments. We very much appreciated your presentation to us today.

Our next presentation will be by the Ontario Association for Continuing Education. As Ms. Dobell brings her delegation forward, I do have a few announcements for members, particularly concerning the agenda.

This afternoon, you will note, we are having a briefing session by our two researchers, who went to San Diego and attended the conference down there and also visited some of the year-round schools in California. We will be starting at two o'clock sharp with a half-hour video and we would like all members to be here right at two o'clock if they wish to avail themselves of the video information.

The second thing you will note is that our hearings will be continuing the week of March 28, which is immediately following Easter. We have had to extend our own school day. You will notice that our hearings are starting at 9:15 and in fact we may end up extending at the end of the day as well in order to accommodate the rest of our presenters.

We will keep you posted. If you have any concerns about the agenda, would you please speak to the clerk so that she can make appropriate suggestions and amendments?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one thing, since you have raised this matter, and not to hold up our deputants very long. It does strike me that we have left ourselves a full week for writing our report and I am not sure we require it all. If it is problematic for members getting here at the 9:15 starting time—as you know, the difficulty is, when can we do any office work during this period at all if we do not get into our offices for at

least an hour and a half in the mornings before we come into the committee? It is just problematic.

The other thing I wondered about is that I had hoped we might have some people from that California symposium coming. I do not see any of that scheduled in and wonder if there is any possibility of trying to get some of those people up here at the beginning of that final week. Have any thoughts been given to that?

Madam Chairman: In answer to your first question, the reason that we were trying to complete the hearings the week of March 28 was so on that Friday we could give some direction to Bob and Ann to commence writing the report. As you know, it takes them some time to get the first draft put together. That would then give them until April 17 to get the first draft in order, and at that time, of course, we could consider amendments and different directions to the report.

If we do wait until Monday the 17th to give Bob and Ann directions, we may run into the same problem we did last time in having to ask for permission to sit while the House is in session. As you realize, this is very difficult and the House leaders and whips have made it quite clear that they would prefer that the select committee conclude its hearings and report-writing phase in the time allotted in the intermission. While we are trying to work around that, I am not sure there is much we can do to alleviate that situation.

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On Friday, March 31, you will notice there is a briefing at nine o'clock; this is to research so they can commence the report-writing phase. We are hoping that will not be an extensive session, as I understand several caucuses have major commitments that day. We hope that will end by 11 o'clock that morning.

You have raised a good point about some of the witnesses and educators our research staff did meet and talk with in California. That was one thing we were going to discuss this afternoon. We will have to consider which of those we would like to fly up to Toronto to brief our committee and to answer questions, and whether there may not be an evening in that week of the 28th where we can possibly–

Mr. Ballinger: We could fly up Dr. Ballinger.

Madam Chairman: I am not sure if Dr. Ballinger is any relation to one of our substitutes on the committee today.

Mr. Mahoney: I hope not.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think the gene pool goes to one member of the family and–

Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston is hinting that perhaps our current member did not get those genes, but I am sure–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No, no.

Madam Chairman: You would not be implying that at all.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I do not want to prolong this discussion right now; maybe we could talk about it a bit at two o'clock. It just seems to me that we could still do a briefing session with research on that Friday with some tentative ideas of what we would like in the report and then take one of those days in the last week and have some more groups. What happens when you meet at 9 a.m. is that not only do we not get an opportunity to return phone calls or do any work in our office, but people do that, anyway, and just walk out of the committee room, so the committee is not here to hear all the delegations, anyway. It is silly to organize a select committee that is meeting from nine o'clock until five o'clock in the afternoon.

Madam Chairman: I certainly appreciate those difficulties. In fact, the clerk and I did approach the government chief whip and asked if we could sit on April 6, one additional day, as we had three days of hearings cancelled this week. He indicated that there would be a great difficulty in that as the Conservative caucus was going to be holding day-long consultations that day and had indicated it would not be available for any committees.

Why do members not think about this during the noonhour? Our presenters are waiting very patiently through all this. It may well be that we can work something round on the 17.

Sorry to keep you waiting while we did discuss this matter of business. Getting down to the presentation by the Ontario Association for Continuing Education. Welcome back to our committee. We found your insight and your contribution in the last sets of hearings to be very helpful. We are sure you have a particular interest in this topic, as it very directly would have an impact on what you are doing as an association. Mrs. Dobell, would you like to begin by introducing the members of your delegation?

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Ms. Dobell: Thank you for having us here. I am here as a member of the executive with two other members: Dr. Alan Thomas, from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, who is our main presenter, and Paul Blake, former superintendent of the Hamilton-Wentworth Ro-

man Catholic Separate School Board. We are here representing the executive of OACE. Dr. Thomas is going to do our presentation this time.

Dr. Thomas: The committee will be getting familiar with the song we sing when we appear before them; this is the third time. We are grateful for the opportunity. We are particularly pleased by the reference to continuing education in your recent report. Obviously, one of the reasons we are here is because we would like to see the reference strengthened in future reports.

You are quite right, Madam Chairman, that the school day is a critical factor for anyone considering the range of possible participation in the programs of schools. It is equal to access by the maximum number of people. As committee members will recall, we have argued, I hope consistently, that the public education system ought to be from now on accessible to all those members of the community who need the kinds of resources it provides, irrespective of whatever their ages may be.

For that reason, to come to our conclusion right at the beginning, what we are prepared to recommend to you is a 12-hour school day and a minimum of a three-semester year. Anything that follows from that will be directed at the foundation for that particular argument.

It would be familiar to all of you that the school calendar has never been determined by educational or learning objectives. It has been determined by other factors in the community and indeed programs, curriculum and various other educational activities in the schools have been determined by the length of the school year or the school day rather than vice versa. What we are proposing is a calendar that we believe will be of a more educational advantage, that will conform both to the demands of learning and teaching and to developments that are occurring in the community at large.

Again, you would be familiar with the various movements over the past 50 years. The most prominent one, perhaps, has been described as the lighted schoolhouse movement, an argument that schools ought not to sit idle for larger portions of time than the time for which they are used for educational purposes. This is an argument that grew increasingly in strength as it became apparent that there were educational needs in the population, pressing ones that extended beyond the immediate population of children that were predominantly served by the schools.

The lighted schoolhouse movement was joined by some fairly substantial economic arguments with respect to the use of school property. But one of the things that occurred, particularly towards the 1970s, was that school properties often got used for noneducational activities. We had for a period of about a decade, as the children declined in numbers in the province, a quiet but sometimes locally vocal contest over the uses to which school properties ought to be put. By and large, our own conclusion is that the educational objectives have won that battle for the time being, and we are anxious to consolidate that.

In arguing for the responsiveness of the system to the whole community, it becomes important then to talk particularly about the secondary school. We are less competent and less immediately concerned with elementary schools, because we do not see them as being primary locations for adult students or older students; and indeed, because what has now come to be called adult basic education, which might otherwise be described as elementary education for adults, has tended, we think quite properly, to be focused in the secondary schools.

We suggest, for example, that anyone looking at the use of secondary schools at the moment will find that they are subject to an enormous variety of uses and that, to a large degree, the lighted schoolhouse campaign has also triumphed and that schools are in use over protracted periods of time, but the problem is that the uses to which they are put are not very coherent with respect to educational objectives.

One finds, for example–this is perhaps the most useful one–continuous pressure from young 16-year-old, 17-year-old or 18-year-old adolescents to be able to include night school programs, that is, evening classes, in their regular day programs. In some cases they succeed and in some cases they do not.

We do not see why this should be an issue. We think that the kind of school day we are recommending would allow people to pick the required number of classes at any time over an extended period, which would allow them to do what we are increasingly asking adults to do anyway, which is to combine going to school with other demands on their time in the whole society, perhaps the major one being employment. But we should not lose sight of the kinds of things that Walter Pitman was talking about, which is the time for young and older people to take part in other community service activities and be able to combine them with taking part in school.

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We think that what we are arguing would simply legitimize and rationalize a great deal of the present use of schools. It would render the schools both more comprehensible in their objectives and more accessible to larger proportions of the population. It would introduce young people earlier to patterns of adult life.

I was interested in Mr. Johnston's remark about structure. One of the things that becomes terribly clear in any exploration of graduates or participants of secondary school, particularly the upper reaches of it, is that whatever else they have learned to do, they have learned to go to school. Among themselves it is called psyching out the system, and it is a high level of skill that is developed in learning how to cope with the school system.

We are concerned that they should learn to cope with a system which allows them to combine the demands of adult life with going to school over the rest of their lives and that they should learn to do that earlier. We think it would allow for the rest of the population a greater facility of combining demands on them by their families and by their employment with their need to seek the kinds of educational opportunity the school system provides. We find that in existing secondary schools there are now quite well established patterns of the joint participation of older and younger students which do not seem to be doing anybody any harm but in fact seem to be good for both groups of people.

Again, we have fairly repeatedly in our reports indicated that much of what we are arguing for is already there; that there are practices associated with community response by school systems that simply need to be acknowledged and legitimized for everyone across the province. We believe that this would not be an impossible but in fact a welcome development for the professional responsibility of teachers and that many teachers would welcome it.

Finally, we would point out that much of what we are arguing for is imbedded in the new interest in co-operative education and that we think many of the principles that are part of co-operative education should be extended to the secondary school system in total.

We would point out to you that in the early 1960s, two and possibly four school boards ran 24-hour secondary schools in this province and that we proved the secondary school system could do it then. There is no reason to believe it cannot do it now, and there is no reason to believe that the reasons for doing it are no less pressing now than they were then.

We are arguing for a rationalization of a whole range of present practices in the school system that would make the school system more responsive, that would make it more comprehensive, would make it more intelligible to greater numbers of the population who need the resources it provides.

Madam Chairman: Any other comments from the delegation?

Ms. Dobell: I just want to support, obviously, but reiterate something we said in our earlier presentations which I think goes along with this. The only break-point that we see as having any basis in logic is between voluntary schooling and nonvoluntary schooling; that is, therefore, the age of 16, as currently determined.

Under 16, there is some custodial notion and there is some younger maturity, and you may want to deal with that in a certain way, but once you are over 16 and once the whole voluntary issue is there, then students should behave as we describe.

I think that is the only break-point you might want to consider as legitimate. Other than that, there is no way, there is no justification for defining an adult or breaking off different behaviour patterns or different access or different anything apart from this voluntary-nonvoluntary break-point.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We have an extensive speaking list, starting with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am not exactly sure how I want to start. If you look at what has been presented to us this morning, principals came before us and suggested we have two five-month semesters. Walter Pitman came before us and said that dealing with the notion of the hours of the day, etc., was irrelevant until we really got down to looking at what it was we were teaching and trying to accomplish in the school: the mix between custodial functions, strict academic learning functions and I suppose co-operative connections with the community. He said that that was what we really should look at and not the arbitrary structure.

You seem, by what you are saying initially, to indicate that up to this point the structures were driving the pedagogy rather than the other way around. I am wondering how you respond to the idea that your structure might do exactly the same thing. What is the guarantee in your structure that, except for access by the adult learner–I understand that emphasis–you are not just doing the same thing: putting a structure on and the system will accommodate itself without your

really sorting out the pedagogical or social service reasons for the school?

Dr. Thomas: I think the difference lies in the fact that the structure we are proposing–provided you have to have any structure at all–allows a very much larger choice on the part of the learner. That is, it gives the learner a chance to negotiate with the school system earlier than is now the case, and in fact more than is now the case for everyone. It gives the learner a chance to negotiate with the school system about how the learner will complete those programs, within, of course, some limits.

It is clear that our educational system speaks in terms of individual achievements and individual goals and in fact measures individuals. But it behaves and operates on a collective basis. That is, it always works basically in terms of groups of people to achieve individual aims. There has to be some kind of structure.

Our view is that this structure maximizes the chance for the learner to be very much more self-determining within that structure and to be able to move in and out of several different systems, each of which has its own organization, more easily.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I wonder if I could ask two supplementaries. One is putting this in a context of something like streaming, where the structures in that case drive students to have decisions made for them–or to make decisions, however you want to look at it–as early as grade 9. This committee has suggested that that be held back a little bit.

It strikes me that what you are talking about, the learner-driven control of the system, is much more understandable from an adult's perspective or from a mature adolescent's perspective; that is, from grades 9 and 10. Yet you are putting this into the high school, as you say, for obvious reasons that it should be there rather than the elementary panel. I see some problems there with our present structured screening notions of preparing children. I wonder if you could comment on that a bit.

Dr. Thomas: I would be happy to, but I will give my colleagues a chance.

Mr. Blake: In our second presentation to the select committee we suggested that there should be a real distinction made between the intermediate division and the senior division. Much of what we are talking about is the connection of the senior division with the adult. I suppose we are looking at grade 11 upwards in terms of the present school system.

To go back to your earlier point, I think what we have at the moment is a highly institutionalized system. If I could take a minute or two, I could go back and perhaps look at how we got to where we are. It seems to me that the baby boom in the 1960s and 1970s created a political need to look after the young in some kind of an institutional setting. We were asked to take these large numbers and provide a place for them with a custodial kind of function.

It seems to me that the schools have really done an excellent job of that. Almost all the needs of a student in his teens is looked after inside that institution. If I can take that a step further, we really have developed a society within a society. In some ways the school society is quite different from the adult society into which they are trying to move.

We are getting the kind of criticism which says that they are coming out of the school ill prepared. I do not think they are ill prepared. They are well prepared in terms of where they have been. What they are not prepared for is the world into which they are moving.

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Our proposal then would try to break down that degree of institutionalization which we have put in there and, particularly for the senior and adult groups, try to move away from that, giving, as Alan says, a great deal of autonomy to the individual to be responsible for his or her learning and to try to mix that learning along with work or community service or the kinds of things that Walter Pitman was talking about in terms of the arts.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This will be my last supplementary, which follows from that nicely, I think. It is, again, this problem of the structure, developing some things and maybe shutting some other things out. Part of the custodial function that has been taking place–and I know Walter did not mean to do this; he said he did not want to denigrate that role–but there is a learning function which takes part in much of what might be seen to be some of the custodial action in terms of extracurricular-style activities which are now organized to be just outside the school day as we know it, at the end of the day, etc.

If you move to this kind of option and somehow try to place it, not just in the overall high school but now in the senior-school part of the high school, what does that do to things like finding a co-ordinated time for extracurricular activity that the young people now see as part of maybe that second society, but as part of another

kind of learning, of working together and social functions and that sort of thing?

Ms. Dobell: You perhaps know better than I to what extent the studies for Radwanski showed us the high proportion of youngsters who are combining work and learning right now–17-year-olds, 18-year-olds and so on. Radwanski, in my view, had a bad reaction. He said: "It's terrible. Stop it." I believe that it is not terrible, that it is a good transition and that you could not stop it anyway and you had better learn to maximize it and its value.

Your question is a question perhaps conceptually thinking of a number of years ago rather than now, because we already have this high number of the 16-year-olds and up working. So, whatever it is you are worried about is already taking place because of their commitment to the workforce which currently exists.

I think the school works around it. They start early. They do something of an extracurricular nature in the morning, before eight. They have stuff at lunch. They try now to accommodate the fact that the youngsters are not traditionally there, as they used to be, until four o'clock to do their extracurricular activities.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: There is a school community. There is social behaviour that is learned in the school community that would be drastically changed by this type of proposal.

Dr. Thomas: It might be. I am not sure it would be changed for the worst. The post-secondary system operates on this basis very well. It runs extensive athletic programs. It runs extensive social programs. It seems to me that numbers, much less than structure, are the problem. It seems to be able to do that quite well, and essentially those are things that are on the path to learning to be an adult. We think that the secondary school ought to be helping kids to learn how to be an adult and that changing the structure this way will help them do that better.

Ms. Dobell: After all, in Quebec, they are in the collège d'enseignement général et professionnel at age 17. It is free education in the two years of the CEGEP. They take them right out of school a whole year earlier than we now do and put them into the CEGEP adult atmosphere.

Mr. Blake: It seems to me too that, at the moment, the expectation is on the school that it will provide all the recreational and other kinds of activities that you are talking about. In some sense, there comes to be a great deal of competition between things like the Young Men's Christian Association or the local soccer club. If in fact they are successful, then in some way the school is not successful. I do not think that is good. I think those other kinds of institutions should be allowed to flourish, and kids ought to be making those decisions and not being channelled into them as they are in the school.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Johnston. Mr. Adams is on the speaking list next, followed by Mr. Beer, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Cooke.

Mr. Adams: I am very interested in your brief. The point about the school day and the school year not being determined by the needs of the school is actually not surprising. I think it is interesting the way you put it, but it is not surprising, is it?

It seems to me that your example of the shift from Saturday mornings suggests the sorts of things that have determined the school day and the school year. As you point out, as the working week shrank, a student did not go and that suggests it is a change in family life, for example.

I think you heard the little exchange I had with Walter Pitman before about this very important change that has just occurred. For what you called involuntary students, the younger ones, the sort of position we were getting to is that schools might in fact be used–we did not say a 12-hour day–on a 12-hour-day basis, not the students being formally instructed all that time but for those involuntary students.

How does your proposal for a 12-hour day, 52-week year or whatever it is for the voluntary students impact on the possible need of those facilities being used differently for the involuntary students?

Dr. Thomas: I suppose one of the implicit assumptions is that one of the objectives of the school system is to help involuntary students learn to be voluntary ones. Everything we have to say about continuing education is based on the assumption that people will choose, voluntarily, to use educational resources to improve their competence and skills so Ontario can compete with the world and all that stuff.

Our view is that it cannot be anything but helpful to have both of those things going on in the same environment, that the involuntary students will say, maybe much to their disbelief, that there are people who choose to be there, and that they will see that it is possible to leave the environment that Paul describes. Paul said in another way that whatever children learn to do they learn how to go to school. Knowing how to go to school may not be the best skill for learning

how to cope with the rest of the world, particularly for coping with a life in which you are alternately in school and at work, either consecutively or concurrently.

We at the institute have finished a study for the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation on the impact of older students on secondary schools. Apart from some of the slight concern about the changes it makes on the traditional adolescent community–and it does have an effect on that, there is no question–by and large, most of the effects appear to be very positive for both groups of students and for the teachers involved. It will be different, though.

Mr. Adams: In your 12-hour day, I could immediately see this overlap between the voluntary and involuntary students. But what about your third semester? Are you in fact advocating that the involuntary students and their teachers stay there that third semester, because in that semester there would not be the overlap.

Dr. Thomas: I have to say this against a background of having grown up in this city, in a proper, middle-class family that treated the school as next to God. The instruction I got from my father was that if I was punished at school, I would be punished again at home. My parents would not have dreamed of taking me out of school for any reason except maybe a death in the family or someone being ill. I do not find that same commitment in me with respect to my children. I find people taking their kids out of school quite remarkably and bringing them back. These two weeks are pretty good examples of that kind of thing.

Mr. Ballinger: Now you are making me feel guilty.

Dr. Thomas: I am glad somebody else does.

I think the relationship between the community and the school is quite other than maybe most of us have grown up to believe, that there is a more voluntary relationship between parents and schools, at least, than there used to be. I am not sure that is a bad thing, because almost all of you must know what happens in the schools, particularly the elementary schools, after Easter. The answer is nothing, or very little.

1220

Mr. Adams: I think Walter Pitman would say that it is quality time.

One more point: I did hear your previous presentation. I was actually asking the question from the teacher's point of view. Do you envisage the same teachers teaching the voluntary and involuntary students? What about the third semester?

Dr. Thomas: I think in that case one would have a choice.

Mr. Adams: One what? One teacher?

Dr. Thomas: What we are saying is that teachers would have no greater loads. They would simply be distributed differently. Teachers would teach X number of days a year by contract. That might mean essentially, as it does with most post-secondary people, two semesters on and one off.

You might get those two semesters and the next one off, and those two and that one off. It would not necessarily always be the summer semester. In fact, not everybody wants the summer semester off any more. It is not the same classic commitment to old summer behaviour as it used to be.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Beer has waived his question for the moment, so we will go to Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Jackson: With that pressure in mind, I will be brief.

Mr. Ballinger: We should use that with you more often.

Mr. Jackson: You are quick.

I guess I am more concerned about an excellent brief that did not get fleshed out as much as I had hoped, so my appetite is still there. Richard Johnston has dealt with some of the issues with respect to the impact in terms of pedagogy, and I want to build on that notion because what I sense is happening is that we have nobody driving the agenda to challenge how we approach schools and their interrelationship with the community.

There is nobody out there driving the agenda except–and I might say Jane Dobell, who challenges all sorts of notions. Jane and I will continue to sit here and listen, but my frustration is getting deeper.

Schools and what they represent to a community are being challenged, but nobody seems to be providing any focus to them on our side, from the government's point of view. We have a challenge to replace and utilize buildings more and build new ones more, a challenge like we have never had before. Yet we have a rather economic or financial approach to it and therefore solutions are looked at in terms of whom else we can get the money from.

Of course we are now embroiled in a debate between those people providing housing and

those people who would like to provide schools. That, in my view, is most inappropriate.

What is missing from the debate is the challenge to redefine what a school means to a community and how broadly based support can be if schools stop being ivory towers and start becoming all the wonderful things that you describe but do not flesh out in your report.

I am anxious to have you respond in two areas. One is to talk to us about who the lead ministry should be to look at this growing urban problem with this financial response, that really shows some leadership to challenge other ministries to re-examine how schools are utilized. Should it be the Ministry of Education? Although competing interests exist in a community for limited resources–and yet, as has already been indicated with the example of the soccer team, they are putting immense pressure on aldermen for recreational budgets–yet there is clearly a bridge there with what schools provide, so that both of those playing fields do not sit idle for 75 per cent of the time, both of their parking lots do not sit idle.

I am dealing with the capital elements of your point because Richard so deeply went into the pedagogical ends of it. I really want to focus on the capital, because I see that as the major impediment. The major urbanologists around the world, whether it is Doxiadis or any of the others, have always told us that this challenge was coming and that education would suffer as a result, because of the manner in which people respond in a political arena to services built above ground.

Schools cannot win that debate, because there is such a limited number of people who have children in school, so quite frankly, we have to expand the number of people who are involved, and that has a desired social effect, as you have adequately described.

Could you talk to us more about why you believe that no one is spearheading this movement to get our focus away from just simply dealing with education in isolation of the rest of the community and looking at challenging the major financial impediments that seem to be thrown at us? We can do more with fewer dollars if they are co-ordinated on that basis, but we are not doing it, and there are examples where it is working but they are not given the prominence, the support and the legitimacy that they deserve.

Dr. Thomas: Let me take the first stab at it, Mr. Jackson, and then turn to Jane and Paul.

It seems to me that one answer to your question is that it is the public that is driving the schools at the moment. What we have witnessed over the last 20 years, after a determined attempt by the government of Ontario to shut adults out of secondary schools and transfer them all to colleges, which occurred in the late 1960s, in fact what we have seen since that time is a clear indication that large segments of the public believe that schools belong to them and that schools can provide them with the educational resources they need, listening to all of the various kinds of press and what not that tells us about a skilled community, etc.

Thanks to the generosity of a great many boards, which could have turned adults away and have not, we have just witnessed a relentless return to the schools by the adults, and that is where the leadership is coming from.

Second, I was interested that you did not mention what I personally had felt was the major competitor for educational activity at the moment, and that is health. That is a budget that is in constant competition with expenditures in education. I do not know the answer to that one. I think I know some of the causes, but I do not know the answers.

Mr. Jackson: You are falling into the same trap I am trying to get to the heart of, and that is not to deal with it as a sort of entry in a provincial budget. That is why I quoted Doxiadis, because the urbanologists are asking us to turn over certain rice bowls and to challenge the notions. We cannot continue in terms of competing interests. We have to look at education as a holistic situation.

Dr. Thomas: Okay.

Mr. Jackson: I came from a board that was blessed with many pilot projects. We were using school space for activation programs with our hospitals. We had early-entry programs for children, before- and after-school programs, pilot day care centres. In those communities, those schools mean very exciting and wonderful things to those people living there and, therefore, we get support financially to integrate our programs. Our indoor pools in Burlington have to be built on a high school property because we can get more pools at less cost for the total resources in the community. That is the capital-intensive side of the argument that you are presenting to us, which is to redefine what a school means to a community.

Dr. Thomas: I agree. That is right.

Mr. Jackson: So yes, you are right, at the grass-roots level adults who were knocking on doors and getting into schools are driving that

agenda. What I am trying to ask you to put more in perspective for this committee is, why is not being driven here or at the higher levels of education? Why is that not being driven in that forum to start to give clarity to the issues we have just been discussing for the last 45 minutes, not about a grass-roots movement that is bubbling up or percolating, but in fact why we are dealing with it in a segmental financial way? We always lose because of the competing "Health is more important than education" type of approach.

Ms. Dobell: I think that as a result of the push and pull over Bill 30, when the Ministry of Education then decided to say it was paying 100 per cent—we will not argue what 100 per cent is, but it decided to pay a higher rate of grant for continuing ed rather than for the regular day, or give it at least a floor. They will pay higher, but they will not go lower than a certain amount.

That has put the school boards a little bit into a sweetheart situation, in my personal opinion, because they are able to respond to their communities, and Alan is quite right and you are quite right that they are doing that in many cases, but the policy is not elaborated provincially, so they do not need to do it. They can do it if they feel like it, and they do a lot of it, but the provision is unequal across the province because there is no clear mandate, clear policy for schools to deliver. It is whether they feel like doing it. If they do feel like doing it, then they get the money.

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Now, school trustees are not going to want to give up that sweetheart situation. I get more money for it if I do it. If, for some reason, I do not feel like doing it, I do not have to do it. Why would I come to you here and say, "Yes, adults are the thing"? As a school trustee, I have it all under control. I have it my way. It is grace and favour. It is whether I feel like it. Whether I get out of the left side or the right side of the bed in the morning, that is what I am going to decide. These people have very peculiar rights. It has not been clarified, and nobody is challenging it in the courts because it would be hard to do. You have to have a lot of money to do it.

That is why the school boards are not coming. They are getting better money than they ever thought they would get for this program. They are doing it if they feel like it, and they are not doing it if they do not feel like it. Why would they come? That is my cynical view.

Mr. Jackson: Time is short, but I would like to pursue it further. Thank you.

Dr. Thomas: If I might conclude with just one comment to Mr. Jackson, it is that the third OISE public opinion survey has just been published, which indicates that the proportion of adults participating in adult education in the province has gone up from one in five to one in four in the last four years. Second, there is a very clear message that if adults themselves, as well as adults through their children, are associated with the schools, they are willing to increase their financial participation to those schools.

I understand Mr. Jackson's question. It seems to me that the answer lies, in part, in what this committee does in terms of exhibiting the need for, essentially, political will, which is what this eventually comes down to in terms of determining choices between all of those highly desirable values that different people pursue.

Ms. Dobell: I would like to make one other statement, because the member mentioned the Ministry of Education. To a very great extent, the people who work in the Ministry of Education have had a career which they consider to be concerned with pupils, not students. They are thinking pupils. They are thinking young children. That is how they get up every morning; that is what they were trained to do. You have very few people within the Ministry of Education who think this way at all. It is not their background. It is not their career. It is not their training. It is nothing to them. It is marginal. Out the door with it.

Mr. Jackson: On that point, I would like to suggest that at some point in our activities we will examine a few things, but I think it is clear we, as a committee, should be examining the genesis of some of the government initiatives that deal with education that do not particularly come out of the Ministry of Education.

The green paper on lot levies came out of the Ministry of Revenue. That gets at the nub of the point I am trying to make. I would like to get some assurances from the government that it has a window for looking at this holistic framework of approaching the costs and the extension of services for schools and the relationship in a community, instead of "This ministry looks at that problem in education from a financial view. The Ministry of Health looks upon schools from another perspective to help them with their drug and AIDS programs."

That is really the context in which I would like to work with the committee in terms of developing a vehicle for dialoguing that point, because there has been no forum, to my knowledge, that really challenges those notions. Perhaps, as our

deputants have indicated, the solution might lie somewhere with a recommendation from this committee.

Ms. Dobell: The Ministry of Education, I think it would be fair to say, has failed to produce a policy on this question of adult, continuing and long-term education for about 10 years. The reason I say they have failed is they have failed by their own definition. Cyclically, they keep saying, "We are going to do this." Then they put out a discussion paper and we spend five years, five months, whatever, writing and answering and discussing. Then the whole thing disappears. This has happened three or four times.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Then you establish a select committee.

Ms. Dobell: That is right. So they have failed by their own definition, because three or four times they have said, "It's very important that we establish an overall policy." Where is the policy?

Madam Chairman: It may be an overall problem that we have with government and may relate somehow to the fact that we are in four- or five-year terms and it does not really encourage long-term planning.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Let's give them a 10-year term. I have been in favour of that for some time.

Mr. Adams: It depends on how long we have to spend, but I disagree with a good deal of that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would like, if we could, to get a copy of that recent survey that was done. Is that possible?

Dr. Thomas: Yes, I will get it for you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Because there are also other interesting things that come out of those surveys.

Dr. Thomas: That is right.

Ms. Dobell: We had better go out in the corridor. I have my knitting needles.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Although I think we are technically out of time, Mr. Adams, if you would like to make a brief comment, please feel free.

Mr. Adams: We agree with you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: He will get them in the hall.

Mr. Adams: It is swords in the hall; that is correct.

Ms. Dobell: Yes, knitting needles in the hall. We have agreed on that.

Madam Chairman: The people of Ontario are left out there waiting, wondering what is going to happen in the hallway.

Interjection: We will report at two o'clock.

Madam Chairman: We will see who is alive to tell the tale after lunch.

I would once again like to thank the association for your contribution to our committee today. You have certainly given us food for thought.

Ms. Dobell: What are you going to do next?

Madam Chairman: Lunch.

Ms. Dobell: I mean, are there other aspects that you are going to look at, or do you know?

Mr. Jackson: Financing.

Ms. Dobell: See you.

Madam Chairman: Yes, I suspect we will see you in our next phase.

The select committee on education will stand adjourned till two o'clock. I would again ask members to try to be punctual, because the movie will start at two o'clock sharp.

The committee recessed at 12:35 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:05 p.m. in room 151.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR

EDUCATION FINANCING
(continued)

Madam Chairman: I would like to open this afternoon's session of the select committee on education. I commend the members for their punctuality. We will start off with a video, which I think is based on the year-round model in California. I do not know if Ann or Bob would like to make any introductory comments before we go right to the video.

Ms. Porter: Perhaps I can just make a few comments.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Did you enjoy yourselves?

Ms. Porter: Yes, it was very good.

The National Association for Year-Round Education conference was three days. There were 170 presentations and over 1,000 people registered. In addition, we each visited two schools in the San Diego area. We also spent a day in the Oxnard school district north of Los Angeles. It has only elementary schools, but the entire district has gone to year-round education. In that district we talked to the superintendent, trustee and principals and visited two schools.

We also spent a day in Los Angeles and talked to officials at the Los Angeles unified school district and visited Huntington Park high school, which is an inner-city, largely Hispanic high school with an enrolment of about 3,900.

One qualification that should be made about both the video and the conference was that they were made and organized respectively by the supporters and practitioners of year-round education. They are basically presenting the arguments for it, so it is a bit one-sided in that respect.

[Video presentation]

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Madam Chairman: Could I bring the members back to order? Could you take your seats? I suppose "back to order" presupposes there ever was order.

Just prior to having Ann Porter and Bob Gardner discuss their findings in San Diego and perhaps posing some questions and answers for us, there are a few outstanding matters I think we should probably clear up at this time. The first was raised this morning when we were discussing the agenda. Mr. Cooke brought up the very valid concern that, by scheduling early appointments, members would not have that opportunity to return calls and sign correspondence.

I have talked to the clerk, and what we propose is that we do start at 10 o'clock during the week of March 28. Then on the afternoon of Monday, April 17, we would continue any presentations which we did not have time to hear during the week of March 28. If we do decide to bring up expert witnesses from California, we could see them either that same afternoon, if time allowed, or perhaps on the morning of April 18. Do members have any comments on a proposal such as that?

Mr. Furlong: Sounds good to me.

Mr. Beer: Sounds fine.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Fine, although looking at the schedule for the end of that last week in March, I do not have any difficulty moving 9:15 appointments to four o'clock.

Madam Chairman: We did notice there are several spaces for 4:15 appointments, so we could move the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and the Ontario Business Education Association to 4:15 appointments. That would mean we would probably only need one or two spaces on the afternoon of April 17 for those who have not yet confirmed appointments, and that would leave us both that afternoon and the following morning for any expert witnesses we brought in. Does that sound reasonable?

Mr. Mahoney: Sure.

Mr. Beer: Sure.

Madam Chairman: Why do we not work on that assumption?

That leads nicely into the decision to be made about expert witnesses. Dr. Gardner and Ann Porter have listed five potential witnesses they felt it would be very beneficial for the committee to hear.

Dr. Charles Ballinger is from the National Association for Year-Round Education, and I think they very highly recommend that we bring him up and perhaps give ourselves a chance to interrogate him on some of the comments made in the video.

There are also Don Glines from the alternative education unit in Sacramento, Larry Horyna

from Utah, and Norm Brekke from Oxnard county where the whole district has gone on year-round education. Fifth are David Walton and Brian Page from Utah.

Perhaps you would like to comment on which of these witnesses you feel it would be crucial we have come to Ontario and which ones might be alternatives.

Dr. Gardner: It probably depends on what the members want to hear. The first person, Charles Ballinger, is probably the best overall witness in the sense that he, as executive director of the national association, would have a sense of what is going on in all the different areas.

Then there are a couple of people from the states of California and Utah. Those are the two states in which implementation has been most advanced and in fact where most of the year-round schools are concentrated. If you want in effect a parallel to the ministry perspective those would be the two areas, and the last witnesses would be Don Glines and Larry Horyna.

Also there is the superintendent of the one district that went totally year-round, Norm Brekke. That is a fairly small district, so you might want to hear from the state people before that. The state people can also speak to the experience of the Oxnard district.

The last set are people who might be a little specific for the committee's interest. There was a particular schedule, the Orchard plan, which we talked about in our brief a bit. You probably do not need those specifics right now.

I think it is a question of how much detail and how many people you want to hear. If it is just one person, Ballinger is probably the best bet. If you do want to look at the state experience, then either California or Utah.

Madam Chairman: Any comments?

Mr. Mahoney: When will we hear them?

Madam Chairman: A tentative proposal was either the afternoon of the 17th or the morning of the 18th, before we go into our review of the draft.

Mr. Ballinger: I should maybe declare a conflict. I do not know whether he is a relative or not.

Mr. Mahoney: We heard him; he is not, he can count.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I think we had better make sure.

Madam Chairman: We will put that proviso on. If indeed Dr. Ballinger is no relation to the member for Durham-York, then we will go ahead and invite him.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: First, the family tree should be explored.

I think we should go for Ballinger and state representatives who will be able to speak to the particular cases, I would think, in their own states. As well, we will need them from a legislative perspective. Therefore we could get three representatives: one from California, one from Utah and Ballinger. That should be all we would really want.

Madam Chairman: You have talked to all of these people, have you not? You actually mentioned specifically that the committee might be interested in having the first four up.

Dr. Gardner: Yes, we spoke to all of them, and they all said they would be willing to come, schedules permitting. Who knows, you may not be able to get all three.

I should just clarify that the person from California, Don Glines, is now a consultant with their Department of Education, so he is no longer the full-time co-ordinator. The Utah person is the co-ordinator of year-round education in Utah. The California guy, Glines, though, has been at it for a long time and is a very long-standing expert. You could get the person who is actually co-ordinating now, but Glines seems to have the most experience.

Madam Chairman: I understand from what Bob said to me that these people all expressed a willingness to come up and appear before our committee. If that is satisfactory to the committee members, we will have Bob and Ann go ahead and make those arrangements. Obviously, if there is a scheduling difficulty we might be able to work up something where they would come at another time.

Mr. Mahoney: Could I suggest that if there are scheduling difficulties maybe we could just start a little subcommittee to get together and work it out.

Madam Chairman: That is right. The steering committee will now be composed of myself as chairman, the clerk, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Mahoney as vice-chairman. Perhaps if there are any difficulties we could resolve those.

Just a final very brief thing. Walter Pitman talked this morning about involving the community with the schools and having students expand their horizons. I have an article that was in one of the student newspapers in our riding about a middle school program in the United States

where the children actually took an issue, I think it was to Congress, and managed to get their particular environmental concern passed through Congress. That involved not only preparing the resolution but also lobbying and all that type of thing. It was quite interesting, so I brought copies for members if they would like to look at that.

I think we will go back to the video and Bob's and Ann's impressions of San Diego, other than the fact that it was five degrees and rainy. That may be some small consolation to those members who had to stay here and slog it out in the Legislature.

Would you like to make any comments before opening up for questions?

Dr. Gardner: I think what we will do is perhaps just amplify a few of the things that we did learn at the conference that you have seen in our earlier reports. Perhaps we will just do that back and forth for a few minutes and then open up to questions, if that is okay with members. If there is anything specific you want to jump in and clarify right away, that is fine too, of course.

We have a few things that we can pass around. We gave you a list of resource material. We collected a great deal of written material, statements, briefs and so on from the various places, which we have over at our place. If any members want to look at them, they are available, of course.

We can pass around a few things just to give you a sense of it, including the calendar of the conference, which will show all of the sessions we attended, all circled. We of course explained why the members–

Mr. Jackson: You're lucky; we had to write a report.

Dr. Gardner: Yes. It was a very strenuous few days in San Diego, driving through the smog to Oxnard. It was very difficult.

You got the basic line from the association in the video. Just to reiterate their themes, in all of the districts that we spoke to and in the states that have been using year-round education, the driving force seems to have been enrolment pressure, rapidly growing student enrolment and then fiscal pressure.

They go to year-round as a space-saving mechanism. They gave some examples of that, and we gave some figures as well in our report. However, at the conference and in their public relations, they stressed the educational advantages much more. Even though the driving force may have been enrolment, they argue that year-round education has a lot of positive benefits in pedagogical terms. This is something that the conference really did emphasize.

Anyway, just to set the context a bit in terms of the trends of year-round education in the United States, the enrolment in various year-round schools is now over 430,000; that is 499 schools, including five private schools. Ballinger estimates that there will be approximately 600 on some schedule of year-round education next year. Most of that is concentrated in the western states. Again, these are the states that are experiencing the most rapid population growth and student enrolment.

California has now had some 20 years of experience of year-round education in all kinds of different schools, from the very smallest to the very largest. They have 70 districts in the state now operating some form of year-round calendars, and they expect that to be going up over the next few years. In both California and Utah, they have not made year-round education mandatory, but the states have various incentive programs basically to fund pilot projects, to fund exploring of the issue, and they both have offices that co-ordinate year-round education and provide resource assistance and basically facilitate the concept.

The state of California believes that every district should in fact offer a mixture of traditional and year-round schedules, it emphasizes that each district should have a choice between the different kinds.

In Utah, they have some legislation that now more explicitly requires that districts that are growing to consider year-round education. It is not just a question of building in some financial carrots but some actual sticks. They have to look at year-round education before they get certain kinds of funding, especially for new school construction.

We looked at Los Angeles. It is the second-largest school district in the country, with huge schools. The one we went to had an enrolment of 3,900. Those of you from educational backgrounds will understand what that means. It was a bit mindboggling for us. The vice-principal we were speaking to had a portable walkie-talkie on his desk that kept squawking from various outposts of the school. It was some 22 acres in size.

Mr. Mahoney: Do they have a mayor and council?

Dr. Gardner: I do not know.

Some 25 per cent of enrolment in Los Angeles district is in year-round schools, and they see that continuing to grow there.

That is the overall context. As I said, the thing they really emphasize above all else is the instructional advantages of year-round education. They say that it facilitates instructional innovation, rearranging the curriculum, and it facilitates co-ordinating the curriculum and the teaching style at the different levels of school.

It basically forces schools to be in contact with each other. The feeder schools have to talk to the junior highs and then to the high schools as the kids come off these different kinds of schedules. It would seem that co-ordination is something that is facilitated–"forced" may be a better term–by these types of schedules.

The thing they really emphasize is more frequent intersession breaks. Again, there are all kinds of different calendars. We have a couple of them of the different places that we will pass around. This is the Los Angeles one. This is the Oxnard district one. Perhaps we can actually just start passing them about. All of them have shorter semesters and then more frequent intersession breaks. They see them as being of tremendous advantage for remediation and enrichment programs. They found that this is particularly important for disadvantaged kids.

Again, given the particular demographic structure in California where there are an awful lot of Hispanic children, it is especially important to those kids for whom English is a second language. For the at-risk students, the experience would seem to indicate that they benefit from year-round education.

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They also argue that it is simply easier for kids who miss some school to get back on track, to come back on another track and catch up, and that kids are learning in smaller self-contained units so that it is easier for them to retain the material they are picking up.

That is the basic argument about the instructional advantages. They found that the flexibility of the calendars and the more intense co-ordination that has to result from the more complicated schedules benefit their innovation in instructional terms. They really do emphasize the intersession breaks.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One thing you said just triggered a couple of thoughts. You said smaller groups?

Dr. Gardner: The learning is in smaller chunks, so to speak.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Smaller chunks?

Dr. Gardner: Chunks may not be a proper pedagogical term–smaller units of time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What about the pupil-teacher ratio? Is there any change because of their being able to accommodate more students, etc. over the course of a year? Is there a smaller PTR or is it the same?

Ms. Porter: I think that in one school in Utah it dropped from 32 to 28 or something like that, but I think the requirement was a ratio of 28 students per teacher. In fact, they had been going above that ratio, so it allowed it to drop down to what was the required level.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So it does not have any effect on the PTR?

Dr. Gardner: It need not necessarily. Again, one of the things they emphasize is that the space-saving elements would be important, not just for schools that are overcrowded. You could fit all the kids that are overjammed into the school, but even if the school were not facing overcapacity, it would free up space for special programs. Potentially, it could be able to lower the ratios as well.

They talked about the perennial problem of where you fit the special education classes. When you pull a kid out for remediation or a little extra English or whatever, where are you going to go with that kid? They mentioned janitor's closets and the same kinds of problems many schools here face. By freeing up a little extra space, you have a bit more flexibility for that kind of thing as well.

Madam Chairman: Watching the video, I saw there were a lot of pedagogical benefits to having year-round schooling, but I was somewhat surprised at the comments about how convenient it is for parents to have all these flexible vacation periods.

My experience is that most parents do not have four or five 15-day units during the year that they can spend with their children. It would seem to me you are not going to get the same number of day camps, for instance, or other facilities that are set up to care for children during the July-August period if you have them in two-week or three-week periods during the year where they are staggered, depending on what school system you are in. I was wondering whether this was raised at the conference.

Ms. Porter: There are a number of different implications for students, parents and teachers. With respect to parents, a number of speakers indicated that while parents are often initially opposed to year-round education, once it has been implemented the majority seems to be in favour of it.

A number of advantages are stated. One is that it reduces parental burnout. Parents are no longer faced with having the children at home throughout the long summer break and then seeing little of them during the year. Other people mention that if different children within the family are on different tracks, parents are able to spend more time with one child at a time and to improve their relationship with that child. They would argue that there is more one-on-one time.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: How do they get vacations with the entire family, though?

Ms. Porter: Most schools are also closed for a month in the summer, so they argue they can have some time together at that time too.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So they are 11-month schools, not 12-month schools.

Ms. Porter: Also, there is a slightly longer overall vacation period in the United States than here.

Other people argue that not all parents can take summer vacations, so the greater flexibility in vacation times makes it easier to match parents' and children's vacation schedules and families are able to schedule trips at off-season times when facilities are less crowded.

Mr. Beer: So these schools are in fact closed for a month.

Ms. Porter: It depends on the schools. Some of them still close in July, but the other two months may be rotated throughout the year.

Mr. Beer: Normally they are closed for three months, whereas we are closed, at least the elementary ones, for just the two.

Ms. Porter: Yes.

Dr. Gardner: It would vary a bit among the different districts and vary a bit among the different states, but they did try to keep some common holidays. Around the Christmas period they would all have a break, and it looked as if most of the districts were trying to have a common holiday over the summer. Some of them would emphasize that more than others, so it would be a full month in the summer. For some of them, it would not be quite that long. Depending on how you juggle the different tracks, they can make sure there is at least some common time.

The other thing most of them tried to do, and it seemed it worked out in most cases, was to offer parents some choice as to which track their children went on. If the parents wanted to have common time with all the kids, then they would put all the kids on the same track. As Ann Porter was saying, some parents did not like that, so they could slip the kids on the other tracks. It would vary a bit depending on the district, but when we spoke to people in the districts themselves, they said most of the parents got their first choice of track assignment.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: There would be a way of organizing it. I think of a community like mine where there is not a lot of flexibility for vacations for large numbers of families because the auto industry is organized in such a way that the downtime for vacation is when they are doing changeover for a model change. That comes from the middle of July until the middle of August. So there is enough flexibility that everything could be shut down for a month during that time in a community?

Dr. Gardner: Yes, the districts would argue that there is that flexibility. We did not hear of a comparable district. I would be interested in knowing what some of the industrial areas have done with that specific problem. I think they would argue that it is certainly not insurmountable, that you can adjust the schedules as needed.

There are also a lot of different ways of dividing up the time in school and the time out. Some of them go for 45 days and then take 15 off. Some go 60 and then take 20 out. There are lots of variations that could accommodate that.

Ms. Porter: On the disadvantages, one of the concerns parents expressed, obviously, was having different family members on different schedules, especially when some were on year-round education and some were on the traditional schedule. There is also a lot of concern about the implications for family vacations, camps and other activities that have traditionally taken place in the summer. In response, some people would argue that these activities can take place at other times, that swimming lessons or camps can be made available throughout the year.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: More easily in California.

Ms. Porter: Yes. One of the major criticisms or concerns for parents was that it was more difficult to find child care. A number of participants argued that finding child care is a problem whether the school is on a traditional or a year-round schedule, that there is a crisis in child care in general and that it was really outside the school's area of responsibility. I think that was basically, for instance, Dr. Charles Ballinger's position on that question.

When the parents spoke, it seemed that some found it easier to find child care for three weeks rather than three months, and some found it more difficult. Partly it depended on the family

structure. For instance, in one school district in Utah, they did a survey and 23 per cent of single-parent families found it much more difficult to find child care on a year-round schedule, compared to three per cent of the families with two parents, one of whom was working.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What are the demographics again of the schools in California that are using it? Are these mostly inner-city schools, the 25 per cent in Los Angeles, or are they Hispanic schools?

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Dr. Gardner: Definitely in Los Angeles. Maybe after I answer that, I will look—we have a map of Los Angeles with the schools indicated. They are very much concentrated in the poor inner-city and Hispanic areas of Los Angeles.

In some of the other districts, the demographics can vary a bit more. For example, one of the schools I visited in San Diego was very much in an affluent, middle-class neighbourhood. They had originally had quite an expansion of their student population, simply because that suburb had been developed. The San Diego local economy is quite buoyant at the moment, so there has been an expansion of professional and managerial jobs in that area, and they were moving into this new development so there was a lot of pressure on that particular school. The pressure somewhat abated and they stayed on year-round.

Actually, this might be an interesting time to reiterate the distinction between single-track and multitrack. A multitrack is when you have three or four different groups and it is being used all the time; one is off and the others are always on. Single-track means they are going year-round in the sense that there is not the traditional big break in the summer. They are on a year-round schedule, but it is just the one track. That does not save any space particularly, but it keeps the educational advantages.

In some of those schools where they initially faced space pressure and then that abated, through demographic changes or whatever, or another school was built close by, the state's line and the line of the practitioners' we heard as well was that it is far better to revert to single-track rather than go back to the traditional, because you can keep all the educational advantages of year-round without the administrative complexities of multitrack.

Anyway, in answer to your question, basically the inner-city schools and the poor areas are the ones that are facing the enrolment pressure and those are the ones where year-round has been most pronounced.

Mr. Adams: You were getting on to what I was going to ask about. In some of these districts, is there a choice between schools, so that they can choose a year-round school or a school that is not?

Dr. Gardner: In most of them there is. Again, the only year-round district in California and in the country is Oxnard district. Actually, we can pass this around too. This is the package we got from Oxnard, maybe you can put that around to members. There generally is a choice in the formal sense.

Maybe you can fill this in if I do not get it all, but in Huntington Park, which is the huge high school we visited in Los Angeles, parents had a formal choice if they wanted to go to another school, but that would have involved busing. It would involve an awful lot of aggravation to make that shift to another school. By and large, the choices were not between going to two different, sort of equal schools, but going to one in the neighbourhood or being bused some considerable distance, at some considerable inconvenience, to another school.

The choices were there. Sometimes they were relatively constrained, especially if the district as a whole or even the neighbourhood as a whole was facing a lot of enrolment pressure.

Mr. Adams: In the cases where there was some choice, even if as you say it involved travel, was there any discussion at your conference or elsewhere of how people moved, of which way they moved? Did they move very willingly? Ignoring the case where it strikes me that sometimes they had to, whatever their income level, was there any sense of that?

Dr. Gardner: One example that might speak to that a bit would be the evolution of year-round education in Oxnard district, which again is the one that eventually went totally year-round. This was an evolutionary process. I think their first schools, and you can confirm that in the paper, were about 10 or 11 years ago, and then gradually more and more schools went year-round.

They always offered parents a choice of going to the year-round school or staying in the school as it switched to year-round and then going to a traditional one. What they found was that more and more parents were choosing to be in the year-round system. Of course now it is all year-round so there is no longer any choice, but as it was developing they found that more and more parents were in effect choosing year-round. Ann Porter went to more of these sessions than I

did. The general argument seemed to be that as parents got used to the idea and as they saw it working, they came to support it.

Mr. Adams: You gave some examples of the downside in the context of the conference. Clearly, people mentioned that, even though as you said this is a committed group. If you came to Peterborough, where the semester system was fought–people did not really want it in fact–over the years, you would find increasingly that people favour it. You could still find people who would argue against it quite strongly, both teachers and parents, but not students because the students do not know anything else. Did you not come across any people like that in these places?

Mr. Gardner: We actually asked that quite a bit of the people at the conference because it was a very Pollyanna-type conference, in the sense that they were all either advocates or practitioners, and there were a lot of people there who were considering it, from districts or schools that were looking down the road a bit or were going to it in the next year or so and were going to try to figure out the nuts and bolts side of how to do it.

They stressed a couple of things. They felt the initial opposition from parents and concerns from the community were largely around what Dr. Ballinger would call lifestyle issues. These are the kinds of things Ann Porter was mentioning earlier, the co-ordination of child care with vacation plans and so on, and that opposition was significant. There were significant concerns.

Their answer to that was that what is really needed in a district, if it is going to consider moving to year-round, is extensive preplanning, communication and community consultation. They mention going out in the community, with videos and information kits and so on, and really plugging the idea, taking parents' and teachers' concerns seriously–we will come back to that perhaps, what teachers' and administrative concerns have been–and being able to respond to them quite directly, pushing the idea with lots of lead time and lots of preparation.

They then found that the implementation went relatively smoothly, speaking to the kinds of concerns Ms. Porter was mentioning earlier about parents being worried how they are going to co-ordinate the kids' vacations, how they are going to get day care and whether the kids were still going to have the Y programs and camps at different times of the year.

Mr. Adams: One more?

The Vice-Chairman: We have two others on the list.

Mr. Adams: This morning we had a little discussion of how you would fit the schoolday into the school year; and second, the new reality that in fact there is no one at home until evening. Could you just summarize again. I know you did it. You gave both sides of that argument, that in fact the year-round thing was better for child care according to some people and not as good for child care according to others. Do you think the spread of it has anything to do with the fact that on balance it is better?

Mr. Gardner: I think we would probably be a bit hesitant to make a judgement on that, one way or the other. To make that judgement you probably would want to talk to day care people and day care advocates who were involved in that issue in the United States. I think the point Dr. Ballinger and others made, that it is not the fault of year-round education that there is not enough day care and it is not well co-ordinated with schools, is a fair one. It is not so much the scheduling, but perhaps the levels of day care and the co-ordination.

Their sort of positive line is that you can ensure a steadier flow of kids into the day care system throughout the year. That facilitates planning and economic control on the part of day care operators. There are even more commercial operators in most of the American states. In Oxnard, for example, the Young Men's Christian Association had a van that would pick kids up before school and after school and kind of link into the after-school day care programs.

I think we probably have the sense that was a fairly positive view. They maybe were being a bit overly optimistic. There would certainly be lots of kids who would fall between the cracks of, you know after-school day care or not. Some of the schools were developing latchkey programs and in effect running day care programs themselves.

I think there would be both the positive and the negative. It may very well be that the year-round side of it was not the key thing. It was just the co-ordination of the two systems.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am just looking at the calendars you gave out, one for Los Angeles and one for Oxnard. I was just looking at this and telling Mr. Cooke about it. The Los Angeles one looks very much like something that is organized just to get more kids into the school. When you look at the breaks and the vacations people have, they are almost the same length as our vacations here. A lot of them are two months at a time.

Whereas if we look at the Oxnard one, it seems to be doing much more what you are talking about in terms of the pedagogical results of

having people retain things longer. Even if that is just the fact of the retaining, I would be interested in seeing some further elaboration of that. These all seem to involve sort of five-week gaps or vacations, and would seem to fit more with it; but the Los Angeles one really looks like primarily two-month breaks in these courses and it is just a matter of getting an extra few thousand kids into the school system and, really, it would not be significantly different from what we have here anyhow.

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Ms. Porter: One difference further is that the Los Angeles one is a high school and Oxnard is elementary, but it is true that there is not that much difference from what we have.

Another thing about the Los Angeles one is that before they went to the year-round they had double sessions, and partly that was one reason it was accepted more readily. Compared to double sessions, they saw year-round as a big advantage; but definitely they were responding to the overcrowding situation, I think.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Instead of every kid getting it in the summer and then having the double classes, as you say, we end up with kids getting eight weeks in December and January instead.

Dr. Gardner: We have another report here. We can pass this one around. This is a task force that the school district in Los Angeles set up when there was a considerable uproar about the recommendation that the whole district go year-round. There was a lot of controversy around that, so they set up a task force to study the issue.

It recommended a common calendar, a 90-30 calendar. That would mean 30 school days, so six weeks off, rather than those two-month periods. They are recommending a change to that calendar that they are on at the moment. It could be that that gets a little closer to what the year-round education advocates would say would offer actual pedagogical benefits of a shorter intersession.

Mr. Jackson: There has been a thorough discussion about practical workings of this concept, but I guess I would like to break out of that and examine some of the political context in which this was spawned. Clearly, there was some reaction to it in its early stages. What did your investigation tell you about where this movement really began?

These are substantive structural readjustments in terms of the system and its administration, but there are also radical adjustments in thinking. Although I referenced some stuff I was hoping we would get into in the morning session, I think possibly some of the genesis of these reforms is for economic reasons and I suspect is part of the aftershock of Proposition 13.

I have my own beliefs on what I think might have happened, because this is a way of red-circling teachers' salaries by increasing access to blocks of holiday time, so I understand the implications to collective bargaining in terms of a restraint mode. It also responds–I am theorizing–to capital needs in a restraint mode, because it maximizes utility without increasing productivity and capital outlay.

I see the aftershock of Proposition 13, and quite frankly if that is in fact the case, then it bodes well for how well the educational system reacted to it whereas other institutions, we know, did not react well to Proposition 13 and they are suffering immensely.

That is not to say everything is healthy and perfect in the California educational system. It just seems that they have been able to come up with a very clever way of dealing with capping teachers' salaries and increasing student achievement results in the face of restricting dollars.

Did you get into that kind of detail of the genesis of this politically anywhere?

Dr. Gardner: I think your speculation is about right, as we heard it and as we have read it. Ann attended a few sessions with teachers on the collective bargaining side of it, so she can maybe come back to that, but in terms of the original driving forces, it was very definitely growing enrolment in the context of very limited funds for new school construction and virtually no funds for school construction after Proposition 13 in California.

There were similar pressures in Utah. There was no Proposition 13, but there was the same sort of pressure of enrolment matched with not a lot of money to go around. That was very definitely it.

For example, in Los Angeles, the district officials emphasized Proposition 13. What we were hearing from state officials was not only that it cut back money in a very drastic way, but that it totally overturned their planning and really put the educational system in an uproar, and perhaps other systems as well.

In Los Angeles they also had a segregation order, a judicial order. There was tremendous overcrowding in the inner-city minority schools. These were the schools that were going to double sessions and extended days. Educational opinion

is that those kinds of schedules are not beneficial for students.

The judicial order was that this kind of schedule, with its disadvantages educationally, was therefore discriminating against the kids in these minority schools, so the system had to find some other way of accommodating those kids in those schools. There were other orders that limited busing and so on, so this was the kind of last straw that made Los Angeles go into year-round schools in a very big way in a very big hurry. This was a problem that the officials saw: that they were not able to study it fully and look at all the nuts and bolts of implementation. This order was made some time in the spring and they were going to year-round schools in July of that same year. So there was a very rapid implementation.

They also explained that it was not greeted with quite the uproar you might imagine in the community, because of the context of tremendous overcrowding, extended days and double sessions anyway. So in fact year-round education brought about some regularity and alleviated overcrowding. It seemed that in that context parents were in fact happy with the slightly better situation.

Mr. Jackson: On that point, I am concerned about the context in which the committee might examine this. We should really have a fuller examination of why systems got into it, and we should not deal with it on a very limited level of understanding as to why they got into the process. In our first sessions we heard that semestering was not done for pedagogical reasons; semestering was done because it was a lot easier to break up teaching units and to organize entry points, and so on and so forth.

I would be reluctant to do any report that did not look at why it was being implemented and how closely that is associated with really good academic reasons, which is why Mr. R. F. Johnston has expressed interest in their academic scores. The thing that immediately comes to my mind at the Oxnard school versus the Los Angeles system is what methodology is used for testing. There are a lot of other questions to be examined to qualify what I think is the most important element of all the information we have received, and that is that there is a potential for increasing student access and performance.

Those are two very compelling objectives for all of us as legislators for an educational system in this province, so I would be anxious to see that the committee–if we are going to spend this amount of time on the issue–deal with those academic reasons very carefully. But I clearly, as I enunciated this morning, see many of the problems inherent in California that forced them to deal with that being similar to problems that are emerging here in Ontario.

You talk about overcrowding. We know the statistics on portables. Because we are on television, I will not use it as a partisan opportunity to suggest that there is a 75 per cent increase in the use of portables in the last four years–I would not do that–and that there are 150,000 kids in portables; I would not say that, but you are all familiar with it.

The Vice-Chairman: We appreciate your moderation. What do you want to say?

Mr. Jackson It is difficult when we are in declining enrolment in most areas where we are doing it.

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Mr. Ballinger: I will go home and get my rubber boots.

Mr. Jackson: I was just checking to see if Mr. Ballinger was still with us.

Mr. Ballinger: I am still with you, kid.

Mr. Jackson: I am glad you are following.

My point is that we should be able, as a committee, not just to freeze-frame today but also to look well into the future and what directions we may be going in with respect to meeting our capital needs and our commitment to excellence in our schools. If there is no clarity on that horizon, this process may be thrust upon us. Then we should be looking at it very clearly for academic reasons as well as the fiscal reason. That is the point I am trying to illustrate.

The Vice-Chairman: Perhaps you would like to request that we get, if it is available, some of the statistical data on how the kids have actually done in comparison of the two systems. The witnesses who come up in April would perhaps also be of some assistance in answering some of your questions.

Mr. Jackson: The problem with testing and what they are testing for is a very relevant question here, because in Ontario we are also moving towards that kind of change.

Mr. Beer: You had sat in, Ann, on a meeting with teachers on collective bargaining. I wonder if you could talk about that and what their reaction was in terms of the system and how it worked from that perspective. Then I had another question that followed on from Cam's.

Ms. Porter: There was one session specifically given by the teachers' unions and then I guess

we heard from a couple of other teachers. Again, generally it appeared that the teachers reacted positively to the year-round education. In a number of districts they were given the choice of moving to a school with a traditional calendar or staying with a school which was moving to year-round, and they chose to stay with the school.

Some districts also conducted surveys to find out how teachers like year-round education. In the Alpine school district in Utah, they found that more than 82 per cent of teachers preferred year-round education as a solution to overcrowding, as compared, for example, to portable classrooms. The spokesperson for the United Teachers of Los Angeles stated that a survey found that 85 per cent of teachers like year-round education after five to 10 years.

The teachers' unions seem to have been somewhat slow in responding to the changing school schedule. The person from the United Teachers of Los Angeles noted that the issues around year-round education were first discussed at the bargaining table in 1983, which was 10 years after they were first implemented.

Some of the advantages they mentioned for teachers was that there is less burnout. A major factor seemed to be that teachers were able to earn more money by teaching for an extended period of time. Teachers' salaries seemed to vary a lot throughout the United States. In Preston, Idaho, for instance, teachers on the traditional schedule had a beginning salary of $15,000 and a top salary of $30,000. By extending the contract from 190 to 225 days, the starting salary was increased to $18,000 and the top salary to $36,000.

In Utah, the average salary for teachers on a traditional schedule is about $22,000, and under the year-round schedule their salaries were increased 25 per cent because they are working 25 per cent longer. That particular district was under the Orchard plan, so teachers worked for 11 months of the year and had one month vacation. Again, in California, teachers seem to earn somewhere around $20,000 to $25,000 and can make an extra $1,000 or $1,500 by teaching for the extended period of time.

Some of the other advantages mentioned on the video are that they are able to have more flexibility on vacations, and are able to evaluate and reorganize their program, if necessary, around the 60- or 45-day instructional period.

Some of the disadvantages mentioned were that there is little time when all the teachers are free for planning or preparing. A major disadvantage seemed to be that teachers had to share classrooms, so that meant there was no time for teachers to prepare the classroom before the class started. Sometimes they would only have 45 minutes before the class started to put the classroom together. There is also a problem with moving and storing equipment. A major part of our tours was seeing different cabinets they use for storing materials.

Mr. Beer: Did they have any sense, even anecdotally, of feeling they were able to do a better job as teachers? Clearly, where they had been overcrowded you could see that almost anything that would have alleviated that would have made them feel better, but what was your sense of what they were actually doing in the classroom?

I realize there are some studies you probably would like to get hold of, but I guess part of what I am wondering is whether this is just another sort of interesting idea, like semesters, which may help in a number of ways, but you are still wondering whether, in terms of the content and the achievement of the students, it really makes that much difference, however it might have helped in terms of some immediate problems of overcrowding and lack of funding. Could you sort of pick up on that?

Ms. Porter: Certainly one of the arguments was that there is less burnout for teachers if they have shorter but more regular vacation schedules. Also, as I said, they are able to re-evaluate. I guess the same thing kind of applies for the students: the more regular vacation allows for less burnout.

Mr. Beer: Is there documented evidence? The one person we saw in the video was one of the teachers who said the children in her school were a year and two months or something ahead of the kids in the "regular" schools. I guess it depends partly on what the basic evidence is that they are using and what the standard is to begin with.

Ms. Porter: In Oxnard I know they did a series of tests over six years. I guess the scores went up over the six-year period, did they not?

Dr. Gardner: Yes.

Mr. Beer: That was of the kids using this system?

Ms. Porter: The year-round.

Mr. Beer: The year-round students were scoring higher than comparable students going through the regular school?

Ms. Porter: The school district as a whole increased. Is that right?

Dr. Gardner: Yes. Basically what happened was that there are standardized tests in California on reading and writing, so they have some way of comparing, given all the methodological problems of that kind of thing. What Oxnard found was that their scores were increasing. They were below the state average, which was not too surprising given the demographic mix and the sorts of resources they had; but as they went on year-round their scores were increasing faster than the state average, so they were catching up; they were less and less behind the state averages.

With respect to the California study, there was one of the state as a whole. It tried to distinguish the poor, inner-city schools from other schools to take away those confounding variables of income and socioeconomic disadvantages. Researchers had a hard time doing that. The conclusion was that year-round education was beneficial, but the major inner-city schools were not showing any particular advantages with year-round.

Mr. Beer: In terms of academic performance?

Dr. Gardner: In terms of performance on these standardized tests. They argued that was because of the particular socioeconomic situation in those schools and that when you looked at schools that were not in such disadvantaged areas, there were some advantages starting to show.

There was a lot of anecdotal stuff throughout the conference, but again from supporters, so we take that with a grain of salt. A number of them referred to research that had been done in their district and it was quite consistent that there had been some benefits from year-round education.

The person from Utah that the committee will be contacting–they are in the midst of a very major, state-wide study of the impact of year-round. It is not yet yielding any data, but they expect it will by the summer. Again, their arguments are that it is beneficial, but the research is not widely comprehensive so it is not quite conclusive.

Mr. Adams: I am still interested in the popularity of these schools as some sort of measure of how acceptable they are. First of all, this enrolment of 71 per cent Hispanic, 20 per cent white, five per cent black, two per cent Asian, two per cent Filipino–does that mean Filipinos who do not speak Spanish?

Dr. Gardner: Sorry, where is this?

Mr. Adams: This is Oxnard. I just wondered why Filipino is broken out. Do they speak Tagalog or whatever one of the other languages of the Philippines is? I would have thought they would be Hispanics. No?

Dr. Gardner: We do not know. It never got raised. The statistics of race in these districts were a bit confusing to us at times; very different from the kinds of ones we are used to.

1530

Interjection.

Mr. Adams: Yes. I kind of think of Hispanics coming from Mexico and Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

Mr. Jackson: There is also other legislation which governs the relationship between naturalized Filipinos given a 100-year agreement with the country, and they are distinct, as are members of the Virgin Islands, for example, or of Puerto Rico, because one has become a state and the other is a protectorate and so on and so forth.

Mr. Adams: I think, as you said, Ann Porter, the mix and the economic level and so on is important. But the other interesting thing, in here in the summary, is that it says in this district private school enrolment is showing a steady decline, and they give a couple of figures. About one in 12 kids, it looks to me, goes to private schools there.

I do not know whether one in 12 is a reasonable figure for California as a whole or anything. But, I mean, they are obviously putting that forward, suggesting that the year-round system has affected that. Did you get any sense that, say, the rest of the state or the public systems are drawing from the private sector?

Dr. Gardner: No, I do not think so. I do not think it really came up at the conference. We talked about it a bit in Oxnard, but not in the other areas.

Mr. Adams: Just to talk about Oxnard, did you feel that the private schools there were important, were significant, that considerable numbers of people were sending their kids to them?

Dr. Gardner: I cannot remember the exact numbers.

Ms. Porter: I got the sense it was declining.

Mr. Adams: It was about 1,300 out of 12,000. That is a considerable number, but, I mean, is that one way–are private schools important in Oxnard district? Did they appear important?

Dr. Gardner: It is hard to know. I mean, there was still certainly some proportion of people who were there. Now, they were mentioned in terms of the significance of social class and education

by the superintendent. The point that he was making was that in those schools that are facing overcrowding and busing–he was not talking so much about his district, because that had been alleviated through year-round schools. But if those kinds of pressures are being faced and if kids of more affluent parents are being bused to other schools for reasons of racial balance and so on, then those parents who have the resources may opt out of the public system.

So he was talking about the impetus of private education as being the social class variables, but he was arguing that the private school enrolment was declining in Oxnard and he was certainly claiming that year-round education was one of the factors there. Again, Catholic schools are private schools in California.

Ms. Porter: Yes, it seemed that a fairly large proportion of the private schools had some religious affiliation. Also, he did give us figures on private schools, which we could perhaps bring the next time. I do not think we have them with us.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you have access to the detailed study done by California and can we share that?

Dr. Gardner: Sure.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How big is it? Do we have to come over to the office?

Dr. Gardner: We can arrange that any number of ways. We can copy the relevant sections or we can lend it out to members, as you see fit.

By the way, on that question of achievement, the first thing that we gave to the committee before the hearings was entitled International Research: United States Experience, Length of the School Year and School Day. That was various things, including your own schools. There is material in there reviewing the available research on achievement. So the California study and the Oxnard material and what not are achieved in there. That is not the latest thing you have got from us, but the earlier one.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would like some more detail on it just because of what you were saying about the problem of the inner-city schools.

The other thing is that in looking at the other document that went around later on the 90-30 move by Los Angeles, I just want to make sure I understood what you said. They were recommending there, in 1988, the move to a straight 90-30 across the system. Did you say they had done that or had not done that?

Dr. Gardner: What happened with that was that there had been a recommendation from the board of education, basically, to have the whole district go year-round within the next period of years. That was greeted with a considerable uproar. The interpretations of that vary, but the most common one is that the more affluent and more white areas did not want to be forced to go year-round. They saw overcrowding as a pressure of other areas and other schools and did not want to be disrupted themselves.

That pressure was brought to bear on the board of education, and the week following, it rescinded that decision and set up that task force to look at what would be the best calendar. The task force recommended 90-30 as the best option but did not recommend that the whole system go year-round. So that is still in abeyance and is very much a political question in Los Angeles. That task force just said that if you are choosing a common calendar, the best one in its view was 90-30.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But the schools that are presently year-round in Los Angeles are not all now 90-30?

Dr. Gardner: No.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was just for clarification.

The issue of the raising of teachers' salaries, of course, would be great solace to members of the federations, I am sure, although they probably would not agree with us moving back to the base that Utah was starting from. Outside of the question of teachers working longer and getting more money, I wanted to know if there was information on whether this meant there was a large increase in the number of teachers in the system. That is especially relevant to us at the moment in Ontario, where we already may be facing a teacher shortage. Was there much statistical information on the increase of teachers in the system as they accommodated this new, expanding group of students and within this year-round multitrack system?

Dr. Gardner: We did not get any specific information on that. The number of teachers was increasing as the school enrolment was going up, but it was not made clear how that was affected by year-round.

I would not want to generalize too much, but we had the sense that the unions were just reacting to the spread of year-round education after the fact, in effect. It was sort of forced on them and they were then trying to make their best deals as it developed; it was not as if they were able to figure out what they thought of the idea in

the first place and then how they were going to bargain around it. The idea arrived and then they had to work around that.

Again, in terms of longer-term implementation, that was certainly a lesson the union people and the teachers were telling us, that more time was necessary from their angle as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: A last small thing that came out of something Charles was asking and Ann responded to: The whole notion of preparation time for teachers does seem to me to be curtailed by this kind of approach, especially depending on what track you are teaching and that kind of thing.

Also, it could have a major impact in terms of upgrading for teachers, because it is potentially the case that you could never get into university courses, for instance, to upgrade yourself, depending on where you were living and your access to night-school universities, given this kind of year-round, longer teaching load or less time between your teaching responsibilities. Is that something you have much information on?

Ms. Porter: Yes, that was an issue. A lot of it would depend on the universities adapting their schedules to the year-round schedule in terms of availability of courses. In Los Angeles, they argued there was more of an interest in staff development through that kind of thing. Then again, they had two two-month periods, so that allowed some time. Certainly it was an issue.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you for that report. You obviously did a lot of homework and attended probably more of the sessions than perhaps might have otherwise been attended. It is an excellent report.

Mr. Ballinger: Now I am sorry about my nomination speech.

The Vice-Chairman: We are going to try to have that stricken from Hansard, actually. I have already started the ball rolling in that regard. I am sure I will have your support, Mr. Johnston.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10 o'clock in the morning on March 28.

The committee adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
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Select Committee on Education

Length of School Day and School Year

Education Financing

Durée de l'année scolaire et organisation de la journée scolaire

Financement du systèm scolaire

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First Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday, March 28, 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, March 28, 1989

The committee met at 10:52 a.m. in room 151.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR

EDUCATION FINANCING
(continued)

DURÉE DE L'ANNÉE SCOLAIRE ET ORGANISATION DE LA JOURNÉE SCOLAIRE

FINANCEMENT DU SYSTÈME SCOLAIRE
(suite)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to the select committee on education as we continue our hearings looking at the length and organization of the school day and the school year. Our first presentation today will be by the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario. Welcome to our committee.

FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS OF ONTARIO

Mrs. Schroder: Thank you very much. My name is Martha Schroder. I am executive secretary of the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario. I am a parent here in Metro Toronto. I have two young daughters; Adele is in grade 3 and Dierdre is in grade 1. I also work as a nurse.

To my left is Angela Smith, a principal with the Metropolitan Separate School Board; she is principal of St. Clement school in Etobicoke. To my right is Michael Monk. He is a father of two teenaged daughters and he is principal at Bishop Francis Marrocco/Thomas Merton high school here in Toronto. Richard Brock sends his regrets but has work commitments. He is a father of two from Hamilton and works in the Halton region.

The Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario is pleased to respond to the select committee on education's request for our views on the length of the school day and the school year. Certainly these two issues are interrelated, but for discussion in this paper they will be dealt with separately. As well, while the needs of the elementary and secondary school systems are quite different, an integrated approach to these educational modes will be considered in this presentation.

It almost goes without saying that in the past several decades Ontario has undergone radical economic and social changes. If education is to reflect these changes, it is necessary to re-examine, review and, if necessary, revise the parameters of education as they relate to the time boundaries already mentioned.

Economically, Ontario has gone from an agriculturally based economy to one based on industrial and business needs. As an aside, futurists speculate our economy will be based on our effort in technology and human-resource-related industries. It is evident then that ongoing lifetime education will continue to play a major and dynamic influence on this economy.

With these economic changes has come major social restructuring. The familiar 1950s family with the wage-earner father and the non-wage-earner mother has been superseded by a variety of family modes including two-parent working families and single-parent families. This is reflected in Statistics Canada's March 1988 statistics, which show 67 per cent of mothers of children in the three-to-five-year age group are in the labour force. Extended families, particularly in large urban centres, have become the exception rather than the norm.

Other major social changes have evolved over these past decades as the shift in population from rural to urban centres has caused a dramatic increase in urban population. Waves of immigration with diverse ethnic and multicultural backgrounds settled here in Ontario during these decades. The increased complexity and pace of the new technological era and its inherent stresses have placed added responsibility on our school system, so that schools are asked to play not only an educational role but also a social role.

Traditionally, the five-and-a-half-hour school day has commenced around 9 a.m. and finished at 3:30 p.m. This was designed to suit an agriculturally based economy in which children worked before and after school on family farms under parental supervision. However, the patterns and rhythms of life have changed. In today's society people in and around urban centres spend longer in travelling time and work time, so that they are away from the family home for longer periods of time. Particularly at the primary school level, this has led to an increased

demand for preschool and afterschool programs to accommodate this need in a school setting. However, this is only one consideration in determining the length of the school day. At the secondary school level, many students hold part-time jobs for a variety of reasons, including work experience and economic need. Several innovative school programs recognize these needs and are being used to retain these students in an educational setting.

Social changes also play a part in determining the length of the school day. Our multicultural, multi-ethnic population advocates that heritage language programming be integrated into the school day. The increased counselling needs for all children in the school system and the demand for enrichment programming at the academic, recreational and sports levels as well the study of current social programs–for example, acquired immune deficiency syndrome and drug awareness programming–have all placed new demands on our educational system and the length of its programmed day.

The FCPTAO remains committed to the principle that parents are primarily responsible for the supervision and guidance of children. There remains an ongoing need for public education and recognition of the rights and responsibilities of parenting. Recognition by society and business of the uniqueness of parenthood as well as creative use of part-time work, flex-time work and job sharing could, in some instances, be used so that one parent or primary care giver is available for child care and supervision.

It is ironic that, on one hand, Ontario has made great efforts over the past several decades to deinstitutionalize our mentally ill population from large hospitals to community settings as well as to integrate our special needs children into schools and community settings and, on the other hand, is considering having our primary school-aged children spend longer periods of time in an essentially institutional–that is educational–setting.

Some of our primary and secondary schools are used for only part of the year while others are being utilized for a variety of academic and community-based activities year-round. Some activities in these schools include academic and interest courses, sports activities, community meetings and activities such as Brownies, Cubs and the 4-H club. If consideration is being given to year-round use of our schools, then many additional economic factors must be considered, including the increased cost of maintenance and repair of these schools, the maintenance personnel to keep them open, the cost of supervisory and auxiliary staff for programming and the need to climate-control the majority of our schools, which are now unsuitable for summer use.

Another consideration of the length of the school year is that many families now take advantage of the summer months to spend vacation time together. The FCPTAO recognizes the long summer holidays have drawbacks. For some students, the disruption of the routine that school imposes can cause setbacks in their academic and social performances. A long summer vacation also necessitates that the month of September be spent in assessment and review.

In conclusion, the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario remains committed to the principle that child care and supervision remain primarily a parental responsibility. The length of the school day now allows time for counselling, extracurricular activities and individualized programming and help.

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The length of the school year needs further evaluation to allow for a variety of options according to community needs. These options should be studied, researched and reported in more depth. Professional development days should be co-ordinated not only between the separate and public school boards, but also co-ordinated between the primary and secondary school levels so that high school students who are employed in parks and recreation departments, or as community-school program leaders, would be available to run community-based programs as community needs dictate on these professional development days.

I thank you as a parent and as a member of the FCPTAO for allowing the parents and teachers of the FCPTAO this opportunity to express our opinion on this educational issue.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for your very interesting brief. I am glad it was brief because it allows us to have plenty of time for questions. We will start off with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one quasi-facetious comment regarding your parallel between deinstitutionalization and more school time. I think there are substantial differences between involuntary incarceration in a mental hospital, for instance, and the notion that a child at least is on a day pass from the school and can go home at night and be free.

Mrs. Schroder: Certainly that is true, but from their point of view it is being institutional-

ized. They can hardly wait to finish the school day.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do recall that sentiment myself. I was also incarcerated on a school bus for an hour and a half each way, except when I was liberated out the back door by the bus driver on occasion, but that was another matter.

I enjoyed the brief but I note no definitive position taken in terms of whether or not we should be moving away from our present structure. You talk about a lot of pressures that are there in terms of how we reorganize. Certainly Bishop Francis Marrocco Secondary School has certain kinds of pressures on it at the moment, so that one can think about why you might, organizationally, not want to move the structure. But is there a lack of consensus at the moment within the group?

Mrs. Schroder: I sent this survey out to urban and rural parents and rural and urban teachers. The vast majority of the parents still wanted a very long summer vacation. The consensus out there is that they want at least six weeks' time, so that if there was going to be a change certainly there would have to be public education to show the benefits of that change. It would have to be something done fairly slowly and at the community level. There would have to be consensus. This is not necessarily the view of the board of directors. This was a view of the parents and teachers that I surveyed.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What would the response have been? How many responses were there?

Mrs. Schroder: I sent out, I would say, between 50 and 70 surveys. No, I got back between 50 and 70 surveys. I probably sent out about twice that number. I would say it was probably 65 per cent to 70 per cent teachers and about 35 per cent to 40 per cent parents who answered. There was a major consensus among the teachers particularly that they wanted a long summer holiday, but I was surprised at the number of parents who still wanted at least six weeks in the summer. That number came up fairly often.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was wondering what the breakdown of that would be because under employment standards legislation in this advanced province of ours, we have two weeks of holiday, by law, for the average worker, unlike that which teachers or some of the other professions may enjoy. Even politicians can make more time for themselves. So I am kind of surprised that you get a large response wanting six weeks in that most people in the province have substantially less than that for the entire year, let alone what they might take during a summer period.

Mrs. Schroder: I think one of the things they were looking at is that there were community programs for a good part of that six weeks; they knew the programming was in place for their children to go to some form of summer camp in their communities for, say four or five of those six weeks, and then have family vacations for the other one or two. That is the impression one gets.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So if that infrastructure were to change, say as it has in California, which we have been told about, where there is about a month holiday, and in that month holiday the community then had a number of programs that were made available, that might mollify some of their concerns.

Mr. Monk: I just think the major concern there was, "If we are going to change the school year, what can we do?" In the agrarian society we were so used to saying that summer was to work in the fields, so to speak. What would we go to? I think there was a lot of concern as to what other types of models might be available.

They associate summertime with the kids going into another type of program, and they felt that unless there was some other type of program offered there would be some concern. "Let's leave it as it is or show us something that we could possibly do." That, at this particular juncture, has not been demonstrated. We did not have any particular information as to what we could offer them in terms of summer-type programs or what type of year scheduling we might incorporate to allow them to be together. I think one of the things that the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario felt was that it was important for a family to be together and that parents be able to organize, whether they are working for Chrysler in Ajax or whatever, time to be with their kids for two or three weeks during the summer when the plant shuts down or whatever the case may be.

They are somewhat concerned that the students might get their holidays at different times or they might not be able to structure their holidays at the same time. "If we know that there is a plant shutdown, there is no problem; we go," and that sort of business, be it Oshawa or anywhere else in those areas. The concern that they might have is, "How am I going to arrange to be with my kids to go up to the summer camp?" or whatever the case may be. They were probably looking for, from us or from other groups, a type

of structure where that could be explained to them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one final thing, if I might. We have had a lot of concern, I think, as a committee, about changes being made–whether it was semestering and other things–for organizationally positive reasons but not necessarily for pedagogically positive reasons. Did you get much of a response from parents on what they might have envisaged as the positive or negative pedagogical effects of having the organization of the year different?

The major thrust out of California seems to be that the shorter break period means there is less revision, as you indicated, in September–that kind of thing–and that especially for disadvantaged children there is a bigger aid to them in their learning because there is not that huge gap in the summer. Do you get much response from people on either side of that issue as to whether it was positive or negative?

Mrs. Schroder: No, although most recognized the fact that students spent the whole month of September in review and that that was necessary because it was a very long break for students and to get back into the routine of school was difficult for both parents and children.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Somebody made the argument before us as well that the last month and a half an elementary panel was reviewed at the end of the year as well. I would not want to substantiate that myself by lending my weight to it.

Mr. Villeneuve: To the federation, thank you very much for making your presentation. I see where your dilemma is a bit like ours and that you have taken a rather neutral position. It is interesting that you have outlined some of the problems.

Would you stay with a consistent day? My colleague has touched on the year. Would you stay with a consistent day at both the primary and secondary level, or do you feel that there should be a difference there?

You speak of working mothers, which certainly is the case both in rural Ontario and in urban Ontario. At the primary level, would you say that the school day should be a little longer than it is now to accommodate them? Do you have any comments on that?

Mrs. Schroder: I have primary school children so I am speaking on a personal level. I think the five-and-a-half-hour day is about as much as they can cope with. For working parents it is much more difficult, if one parent is not at home, to accommodate being at home to see the child off to school and having parental supervision available when he gets home. But to have them in a school setting for any longer period of time is really difficult.

Again, speaking from a personal point of view, I find that it amazed me how stressed these kids can get. You see it particularly in a grade 1 level when they go from a half day, senior kindergarten to one day and you see the behavioural changes while they try to work themselves into that routine. It is really stressful on these kids. While they work so hard at being good in school and following the routines, they come home and they are just hell-bent for leather and they need that outlet. I think any greater length of time would be really difficult for them to manage.

As they get older, they get involved in more social or recreational things so that their time is taken up then. They really cherish that social time of being together with their friends and being able to do things.

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Mr. Villeneuve: You do not see it as something that should be addressed by this committee at the primary level, then, because of some of the problems that you have outlined. I realize that the parents are always the prime ones and should certainly be the most responsible and we, as parents, sometimes try to shift that, as you well know. Sometimes we may be getting some people who may not agree with you, and I would certainly like to see you on the record with your particular position.

Mrs. Schroder: I think that is more of a social issue than an educational issue. If we are looking at it to improve the quality of their educational day, no. If we are looking at it as a social problem, then whether we have preschool and after-school programming available as community needs dictate is going to have to be addressed. That certainly has to be looked into, because, as the statistics show, the majority of parents are working. I think the 1986 statistics from Statscan said that in two-parent families, 54 per cent of the parents are both working parents; so that has to be addressed but I do not think it is an educational issue so much as a social issue, that is something we are going to have to come to terms with.

Mr. Villeneuve: Another thing you touched on was the use of the schools. I come from a very rural area and have three teenagers who do go to high school. They travel the buses, and certainly it is kind of nice to have them home at chore time

and at cropping time and what have you. I can appreciate that.

On the use of school in off-school hours, you have touched on the costs. You have been neutral on that one. We would like maybe a little more–

Mrs. Schroder: No, I think the schools should be open. I think there are a lot of factors to consider.

Again, I speak from personal experience. I am chairperson of the advisory board at our community school, at Bloordale community school. The concept of use of the public school facilities by the parks and recreation department with the board of education has been in Etobicoke since the 1950s and that structure is there. Certainly their schools are well used, and I would like to see our schools used to the same degree, because we are in a community setting.

Again, speaking from personal experience, their facilities are much better than ours in terms of gym facilities, in terms of kitchen facilities and in terms of space. They have two gyms, this sort of thing. They have a cafeteria, whereas we use the one gym we have.

I believe we should open up our schools and the facilities they have to be used by the community, yes.

Mr. Villeneuve: In rural parts of Ontario it may be the only building with those types of accommodations. I fully agree with you, but it is amazing how many arguments in the negative come forth when that is suggested from time to time.

Mrs. Schroder: I will just say one thing before Mike speaks. If we are to come together as a community, then we have to use the facilities in the community. Those facilities were built by our parents and their parents, and hopefully will be maintained by our children and their children and their children, and so should be available for community use.

Mr. Monk: I know in our particular area, which is out in Durham, there have been a lot of requests by parents and parents' associations to make sure that the schools are available at nighttime for various interest courses and so on and so forth. There has been almost a skyrocketing demand on the schools for use, not only during the evenings during what would be called the regular school year as we see it now, but also during the summer and during the summer day program when there are remedial courses or whatever offered–I think they call them intersession–but none the less during the summer and oftentimes in the evening too during summertime when there are programs, be it sailing courses or whatever, there have been some inquiries.

Mr. Villeneuve: I certainly appreciate your being on the record in that vein. Certainly that is my thinking, but there are times when the negative factors come in that have a bearing on the use of those buildings.

Mr. Monk: I think the parents very clearly feel that it is not a case of having a community centre in a rural area, the school should be the community centre and act in that way and that if there are new schools being built certainly that is to be taken into account and there should be more of that available.

Mr. Villeneuve: And maybe get rid of our portables. Thank you.

Mr. Monk: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: A small political comment there, and also a very real comment. Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. Keyes: Just as a political comment aside to Mr. Villeneuve and to Mrs. Schroder, I personally think we would all agree that the buildings should be available as long as there are community needs that must be met. The question has always been who should pay for those additional hours of use, and that is always a great debate that we need to get into, whether municipal government should pay part of that. Certainly the Ministry of Education officials are not going to like the idea that their budget then has that particular portion peeled off; but it is ridiculous how inadequately or inefficiently we sometimes use the school buildings. Again, coming from a rural background like Noble, I know that even the little, one-room country school was the only centre of community activity where I grew up, and I believe they should be used fully, as they are in many jurisdictions, the best being Flint, Michigan, with its community school concepts, which you have probably visited and watched.

I guess one of the things, if I can make a comment and then ask your point of view on it, is that I commend you for coming and making a presentation to the committee on the particular topic, although my own opinion is that our committee work of inviting people to comment at the present time is almost premature. The people react better when they have something to react to; namely, the paper put out by the committee or such. I was wondering what you really hope to see from this committee.

My own feeling is that the best way we can serve the public in this portion of our report is not to try to put forth a pro or con type of position of the government for changing the school day or the school year but rather to try to bring to light, probably for the first time in Ontario, a document that relates to different forms of organization of the school day and the school year. It then becomes something seen as much further down the road before anything would happen, but it is something that people could then react to.

As I read in advance of today's meeting–this is the first meeting I have been back on, but I have been reading all the briefs–there tends to be a great protectionist view in the ones that are put forth, as though they are looking more at the con side of it. "Don't meddle with what is there." I see that particularly from the teachers' groups. In my opinion, humbly, and as a teacher of 37 years, they have really come out to say, "You've got to protect at all costs what is there now." They are not willing to open their minds to look at greatly expanded use of the facilities and improving, in today's changing cultural-social milieu, to provide better ways, perhaps, of doing things.

I am just wondering whether you would agree that perhaps the best thing this committee could do is put forth positions on both sides so that people would start, for the first time, thinking about reorganization.

Mrs. Schroder: I have to disagree with you slightly. I think it is better that you ask all of these different groups their opinion, because then it only reinforces what you already know. Then you have groundwork to say you already know that there is this fairly negative feeling out there and can present your brief in very positive manner. Whereas if it presented to people, they will say: "Well, we had no say. They didn't want to hear what we said." At least we can go back and say: "They have heard what we have said. They share our concerns. These are some of the types of programming that they are working on. Look at the benefits of these compared to what we have now. What do you think?"

Mr. Keyes: I wonder if someone else would comment, because I would like to leave it so that it is not seen as the committee having a view one way or the other but trying to provide a balance, looking from the point of view that where people are coming from today is mainly from "maintain the status quo," without having a mental framework to say there might be another way of looking at it.

Mr. Monk: If I may respond just for a moment, I think what we are looking at, to a degree, is an educational change. But as Mrs. Schroder pointed out, what we are looking at in a greater sense of the word is a pretty distinct sociological change. I think it is going to take some time to prepare the infrastructures. It is appropriate that you have asked for comment now. You should reflect upon that comment and take a look at some of the briefs that you have probably been presented with and then possibly come up with some alternatives and suggest these alternatives and reaction to these alternatives. I think you have done it the right way.

I do not know whether it goes back to the First World War, but considering the depth of the time line that has existed in the past for schools, I think you are looking at a fairly significant change, and it will take some time to even get some people thinking in any kind of positive way on that. But I think you are going about it correctly. With more parents taking holidays at different times of the year now, I think we have not accentuated as much as we should have the difference between rural and urban that exists both in the family structure and when families can take some free time together. That is one aspect of it.

Another concern that I have–and this is not from my parent point of view but from my professional point of view–is there really a sense that schools are not being used that much? I am in a school that is used almost every weekend and every night all year long. Is it perhaps that this is not being communicated to a lot of people?

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Mr. Keyes: You do not mind returning to the panel a second time, then, is what you are saying.

Mr. Monk: No, we really think this is a critical issue.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We are such a congenial group, how could he help but want to come back?

Mr. Furlong: Some of us.

Mr. Keyes: Did the Easter bunny not visit you, Allan?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is your back bothering you, Allan?

Mr. Furlong: I was just dealing with all those people who were taking their holidays during the March break and driving down.

Miss Smith: I think you have to live with the fact, too, that change is hard for teachers and for parents, for all of us.

Madam Chairman: Our final question will be by Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: I will try to maintain the congenial spirit. I am concerned that perhaps the motivation for even looking at this issue seems to be–I hear it all the time; I think Mr. Johnston or someone said it earlier–that times have changed, that the kids are not needed to bring in the crops on the farm.

I am a city boy and we cropped a different kind of crop. It was a harvest of the green. When you grow up in a big city with a bunch of brothers and sisters, you have to find some time to make some money and to have some alternative learning experiences outside of the school. In the inner-city schools, we had to let the schools breathe for a couple of months after we had beaten them up.

Is the system broke, the system to take two and a half months off in the summertime? I just wonder if we are perhaps looking at it too simplistically and not realizing that it is important (a) for the kids to have the alternative learning experience; and (b), particularly as they get older and further on in secondary school, that they have other alternatives to make money for their own interests.

A young son of a very good friend of ours left school and has now dropped back in because he found he really did not like working full time and how rough that is. Had he experienced that a little more in earlier years he might not have dropped out in the first place. The grass is always greener, but working ain't all it's cut out to be, so to speak, and it takes some time for kids to recognize that.

I would like to be as open-minded and flexible as my colleague the member for Kingston and The Islands (Mr. Keyes), but I just wonder is the system broke and are there other benefits in leaving the system as it is that we should be stressing?

Mrs. Schroder: I think one of the benefits of the educational system here in Ontario is that we re-examine all these aspects of it and ask if we are doing the best by our children. I think that is really important. Whether changing it is going to be better is something we are going to have to look at. I do not have enough information to tell you whether I really believe it will be better.

We have had this system for a long time. It has worked, but society certainly has changed and is continuing to change. Change comes, as Miss Smith was saying, so slowly because people are resistant to change. If change is going to be best, by the time we work on that we will be into the future. We are not working for the present for our children, we are really working for the future of education here in Ontario.

Mr. Mahoney: I agree with that. Having three teenagers in the education system, if they did not work in the summertime they would not be out of school by any means, but they would also have very limited options to do things they might want to do on their own personally. It is the combination of the alternative learning experience and the economics of it from the individual child's point of view, not necessarily the parents', that I would like your reaction. Let's not just look at when we are all going to take holidays and jump in the roadster and drive to Florida. That is not really reality.

Mr. Monk: Being also the father of two teenaged children who this summer will be getting their first opportunity to have what is called a summer job, acting as counsellors working at a summer camp, the Girl Guide summer camp at Doe Lake, they are just excited as all get-out about it.

Mr. Furlong: I take it they are girls.

Mr. Monk: They are girls; a good qualifying question.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was another of Steve's dreams.

Mr. Mahoney: That was a good summer job I had.

Mr. Monk: None the less, they are getting leadership opportunities up there and other opportunities besides pulling down a bit of green, as you alluded to, that urban crop. They really are looking forward to it and appreciating it as their first summer opportunity to go out and do something different.

They are in a good environment and we kind of appreciate them getting into some sort of regular thing that is different from school, yet we know it is a learning experience with respect to responsibility, that they will be picking up leadership skills, all these kinds of things. Some of them are available at a normal high school, but it is not a typical experience. It is something different. As we all grow and learn and do different things, I think it is an enrichment.

It is not to say that a different form of the school year would deny them that opportunity, I am not saying that. Students' reactions and parents of teenagers who appreciate them working and doing those sorts of things certainly want them to be able to experience different things.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Madam Chairman, if you remember, some of the information we got from the California models, a range of them, would have allowed some trimester systems where an older student, for instance, rather than

dropping out of school for a full year, as may take place here in Ontario, could get some time to take off one of those sections and work for three to four months and then go back in if they chose to, as well as the regular monthly breaks.

They had about three different organizational models they used, which I gather was causing some confusion and they seemed to be wanting to move them down to more regularized organizational structures. The options will be there. The question is more the fundamental question of how we adapt to change and whether people are ready for it.

Mr. Mahoney: Part of my point was that the California option clearly did point that out. I am not totally opposed to a change here if it is something that can be structurally organized and beneficial. But California, unlike here, has 12 months of wonderful weather. We have eight months of winter and four months of bad skating. I suspect that has an influence on the type of employment that is available, the type of employment you are referring to, the type of jobs my kids have worked at. I just think we have to look carefully at that.

Madam Chairman: I did say Mr. Mahoney had the finally question, but I think Mr. Beer has a burning one he cannot wait to ask.

Mr. Beer: I do not know how burning they are, but I have two quick questions.

Have you talked at all with similar organizations in the United States that are involved in year-round education? I just wondered if you had any input from there.

Mrs. Schroder: No.

Mr. Beer: The other question is, in the responses you received, was there any discussion that perhaps one might look at having, within board jurisdiction–obviously, this would be simpler in some larger urban areas–perhaps one high school or maybe some attempt over a certain period of time to try a different school year at a particular high school within that jurisdiction? Was there any of that sort of thing that came from people?

Mrs. Schroder: Yes. Some of the parents said they would like to see a variation according to community needs. They did not specify what those community needs were, but would like to see some variation allowed within what the community dictated. There was that feeling.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the federation very much for the time and effort it spent in making its presentation today. Mr. Monk, the next time we get together, I might be able to give you a job analysis of your daughters at Doe Lake, as my daughter is going as a camper this year. I will let you know how the appraisal turns out. Anything you can do to arrange for her to have a pleasant stay will be most appreciated.

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Mr. Monk: I will do my utmost.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for coming today.

Our next presentation will be by the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. Please come forward. Welcome back to our committee. One of the advantages of having an ongoing series of mandates is the fact that we get to welcome people back. They become like old friends after the second, third or fourth time. Anyway, it is nice to see you. We have 45 minutes for your presentation, which includes question time. Please start by introducing yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard and then begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

Mrs. Bawden: I am Mary Bawden, president of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations and I have with me today our first executive vice-president, Jan Purvis, who a month from today will sit in front of you and say she is president if you invite her back, and Norma McGuire, our second executive vice-president.

First of all, I would like to thank the select committee for the opportunity of participating in this process of investigation that you are carrying on. We wish you much success in your deliberations because you are dealing with some very complex issues.

As we said as we discussed our last brief, we feel this is a difficult issue for parents to pick up on because of some of the terminology that keeps cropping up. In particular, the word "semestering" sends our people off thinking about the secondary level and we really feel there are great implications in this discussion for the elementary level.

In some of the models I have seen, they talk about adjusting the school year into two equal halves. I am not speaking as officially as I am personally. I think that is not really much of a change to the school year. That is simply shuffling it forward into August so that the winter break will come in the middle. It is still putting in the same number of hours. I think perhaps there could be merit in that sort of investigation. However, I also read in my newspaper that there are Elgin county farmers asking for the school

year at the secondary level to start in mid-September, so I think you have a real dilemma.

By way of our introduction–we must get right to the brief–altering the organization of the school year raises many questions and concerns, especially with regard to its impact on curriculum, its effect on family life, its economic implications for summer employment opportunities and for tourist and recreation industries, its implementation costs and its advantages for students.

We present to you a lot of questions from our members. I will ask Jan Purvis to start.

Mrs. Purvis: Just to preface the questions that were raised, we did not take a firm position one way or another. I think, picking up on some of the discussion that has just preceded our presentation, it is very difficult for parents to come to grips with this notion of changes in the school year until they actually have some vision of what the government is considering. Mr. Keyes, I think that was the direction you were headed in with your previous comments. We therefore took the direction that we would have a lot of questions to ask, and how that falls out in terms of a position remains to be seen, I think.

First of all, as far as curriculum is concerned, these are some of the questions that came into the minds of parents we are representing. In secondary schools, will all courses be available in all semesters? Will changes to the school year at the elementary level accentuate the hurried child syndrome? What steps will be taken to prevent even faster fast-tracking and high school graduates who are too young?

Will the completion of the secondary school semesters coincide with the entry points for post-secondary education? What effect will a 12-month year have on the student dropout rate? Will curriculum content be reduced if it is to be covered in a shorter semester? How will this affect the newly written OSIS curriculum designed for credit courses of 120 hours? How will this alter a school's extracurricular program? Will this increase the teacher burnout or dropout rate?

Will a three-semester system in a community make the split-grade situation even worse? Is it simply a case of making the school day longer, rather than making the school year longer to accommodate the required curriculum; or does that raise the other question, is the curriculum overloaded?

Another area that concerned parents had to do with the effect on family life if there were going to be changes made in the school year. For example, how does having students in school for either a longer day or a longer year improve family time? Who is going to make decisions about which semesters a student will attend? Does year-round school help students learn to deal with unstructured time or does it hamper the student's ability to learn to use time constructively without being on a schedule?

Will this further disrupt families in which the children go to school in one jurisdiction and the parents work in a neighbouring jurisdiction? How will family vacation time outside the usual holiday time be handled if students are assigned to particular semesters? Should the school year begin before Labour Day and end earlier in June? How will this affect the many families who now enjoy the opportunity to spend the summer months with their children?

Changes in the school year will also have implications economically. First of all, if you look at it from a student's point of view, what effect will this have on the availability of jobs for students wanting to earn money for post-secondary education? What will the effect of a year-round school organization be on seasonal employers who normally rely on summer help? There we are looking at the farming community and those businesses having to do with the tourist season. Has this been discussed with the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and the various camping associations? If students no longer have the same opportunities to earn money to enter university or college, will there be an increase in bursary moneys for deserving students?

The questions go on, and I ask Norma McGuire to continue.

Mrs. McGuire: The ever popular one is the cost to the school system. What effect will year-round schools have on school boards' salary costs? Will principals, teachers and support staff be expected to work for 12 months without salary schedule adjustments? How will major maintenance work and annual cleaning work, normally scheduled for summer months, be handled in year-round schools? Will it be done at night and on weekends with overtime costs, so that the classes will not be disrupted?

If schools operate year-round, what additional child care costs will a school system face–for example in the before school and after school programs and lunchtime supervision? Will funds be made available by the provincial government, through the Ministry of Education, to enable school boards to air-condition their schools? We have to think of the comfort of the students.

Will the provincial government assume responsibility for the additional costs this will involve without further eroding the current level of funding for the public school system? Will both publicly funded school systems be required to change to a new school calendar year?

The advantages: To what extent will year-round schools solve the accommodation problems faced by many school boards? Ten per cent? Twenty per cent? Who knows? Will this proposal eliminate portables? Will this alleviate summer child care costs for parents or will it simply spread the costs throughout the year?

Mrs. Bawden: The main arguments to support extending the school year seem to be economic rather than pedagogical ones.

Are members of parliament ready to accept provincial diversity in school year organization and the ramifications of such a diversity?

There seems to be a general concern about the tendency to place increasing responsibility for child care on the educational system—and I would suggest we probably should have added "on the educational budget" in that point.

Any changes will have to involve lengthy, ongoing consultation with parents. How can this be ensured?

Changing the existing school year has implications for all organizations serving children and youth: Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association, recreational groups, minor sports leagues, etc.

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Members of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations adopted a resolution and presented it to the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) and to the select committee on education requesting that a study be done on the effects of semestering on our secondary schools. In the first report of the select committee on education, recommendation 22 requested that "a study be commissioned which would examine the educational implications of semestering." Until these studies have been done and the results examined, it would appear that any proposal to change the school year would be premature and would only cloud the issues.

We recommend:

1. That the physical comfort of students be assured by requiring that all facilities be properly air-conditioned, heated, etc. and that any renovations be completed prior to changes in school schedules;

2. That the provincial government guarantee funds required to implement any changes to the school year and that these funds be in addition to the funds now provided for education;

3. That school boards be required to consult with parents in the community so that proposals will be clearly understood;

4. That school boards be allowed some flexibility so that community needs may be given priority;

5. That we must ensure changes will indeed benefit the child as a learner;

6. That any proposed changes to the school year not be implemented until a study has examined and reported the educational implications of semestering.

Madam Chairman: It is now time to go to questions, although I must say you certainly asked a number of probing questions yourselves. I am totally confused now. I do not know whether you want the members to try to answer some of the questions or whether you want them to ask new questions or elaborate on your questions, but we will give, first Mrs. O'Neill and then Mr. Johnston, a stab at that.

Mrs. Bawden: Perhaps I might say that I think it is beyond anyone to try to answer those questions at this point.

Madam Chairman: It is just to stimulate our thought patterns. It has certainly done that.

Mrs. O'Neill: I want to go back to your implementation of the curriculum for a moment. There seems to be an undertone to what you are saying, that students are being hurried, pressured or whatever other phrase you want to use. You did a survey to get to this point of questioning and I am wondering, is there a general feeling in your association of parents that there is an implication within the school system for fast-tracking or for the hurried-child syndrome, as you call it? I would like to know if I am perceiving it correctly, for starters, and then the basis on which you make this statement.

Mrs. Purvis: I think most parents who are involved in our association feel that the curriculum is very full and that we see signs of children needing time for themselves. I was interested to hear the previous group attack the same question, that children need their own time to play. If we keep them in school for a longer day or keep them in school for longer periods of time, that has implications of the hurried child, as I guess the jargon is.

Mrs. O'Neill: Did you actually get responses to this kind of question, either in the presentation of this brief or your previous brief?

Mrs. Purvis: What we were asking our members to do was to ask their questions, and one of the questions that was put forward with some frequency was, what does this do in terms of pressures on the children in the classroom?

Mrs. O'Neill: So this ties in with your other phrase "a crowded curriculum."

Mrs. Purvis: Yes.

Mrs. Bawden: I think we are very concerned that the curriculum is overcrowded, but I think the other implication we are getting from our parents is the five-year to the four-year OAC change. There is a general undercurrent among parents of, "Let's see what is going to evolve with that." This raises the questions much more readily.

Mrs. O'Neill: To this point not much has arisen on that, as you know. In fact, eight per cent to 10 per cent seem to be taking advantage of it, and that may be a bit generous.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: These are very useful questions for us. Going back to Mr. Keyes's point, I do not know either what is going to come out of this in terms of the timing of this particular issue and the other matters the committee has to deal with, but it is quite possible that what we would try to do would be to address a number of questions, add a number of our own as we go along and then put that out to people as what it is quite possible will come forward. They are very useful. Let me throw a couple back at you, however.

One of the interesting responses–it was predictable and I agree with the notion–is that we should not deal with this just on an organizational basis but should look at it on a pedagogical basis if we are going to make any changes.

What are the assumptions, in your mind, or the pedagogical validity of our present system of organization of the school year, specifically? We have some rationale for the five-and-a-half-hour day or whatever, but what about the year? I have never seen a pedagogical rationale for our present system. It has been entirely a sociologically oriented phenomenon. Do you know of anything that says our present system has a pedagogical rationale? I mean for a month's review in September, a review before exams in June and then a long summer holiday for kids at various stages of their development. I have never seen it analysed.

Mrs. Bawden: It would make a good study.

Mrs. Purvis: That is another question.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think, though, before we get too concerned about looking at the pedagogical responses for this other process, if it were to move to some other process, we should understand how it is we got into the present one and realize that we may be doing things by rote in that, rather than for really good, sound learning reasons.

The other thing I would like you to address, if you could–it is an interesting question for me–is that although we have said the length of the school day and the length of the school year, very few people put those two things together.

I wonder if one of the advantages of a longer school year might be in reducing the instructional school day, and come to something that matters as well in that if you lengthened it, that might be a means of dealing with some of this freer time for students during the regular year, as well as meeting what are the real vacation needs of families at the same time.

Could I have some response in terms of how those two things interact, as far as you are concerned. If you are worried about an overcrowded curriculum that we have now, if you had more instructional days during the year, is that one way of maybe easing that problem?

Mrs. Purvis: Ideally, I think it would ease the overcrowded curriculum situation. In a practical sense, I do not see it flying. I think parents would probably object to an even shorter school day.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am talking about an instructional school day. The last group that was here complained, as you do implicitly, about the sort of custodial role of the school, but with the new reality of modern society, that custodial role is going to be there, it seems to me.

The question then is how we look at that. Walter Pitman, when he was here talking to us, theoretically talked in these terms, that we should look at the instructional day and what we are actually trying to get done in the classroom and how much time we really need for kids in the classroom, and then let's look at that custodial period and see if there are more creative ways of kids learning in other kinds of fashions during that custodial period.

I guess what I am saying is that in your actual instructional period, you may be able to reduce the time in school if you have a longer period, recognizing that you are still going to have a custodial role of some kind, and maybe–and hopefully–quite a creative and community-involved custodial presence for the rest of the day. I wonder if there are not some creative opportunities there.

Mr. Beer: There are always creative opportunities.

Mrs. Bawden: This is one of them, we have to say.

I think there probably are a lot of those sorts of things, but hovering right over those creative opportunities are financial responsibilities and it becomes a much bigger issue. It seems to me this whole thing is a much bigger issue, to be sure that we are indeed going to realize economies, if that is the rationale for extending it in some areas.

It is a very complex issue. You need more than a few minutes to try to determine what those issues really are and then debate them.

1150

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I did not mean to belittle at all the notion of the financial implications for this, because we saw in some of the Californian experience that this was done for cost-saving reasons in overcrowded situations. Implicit from some of your questions are valid things for which I would say, yes, if you are going to save some money on some areas, then there are other areas into which you are going to have to put more money or you are going to have a system which is not going to be any better for the students than they have presently. It could even be worse.

Could I ask you another interesting question that, it seems to me, is posed by this: What about flexible entry into the school system that maybe is offered by a more flexible organization of the school year than that which we have presently? There is that whole question of kids falling behind very early because of our rigid kind of approaches by birth date, as to when a child can enter the system at this point. Is this one way of getting at that issue?

Some groups have argued that with us. Or are there better ways, as far as you are concerned, to make sure that kids are not so developmentally out of whack with each other in grade 1 as we have in the present system?

Mrs. Purvis: I think, personally, that would be one of the advantages of developing a more flexible school year because I think then you could accommodate those circumstances where a student is going into kindergarten, but perhaps really is not developmentally ready to do that. The pressures that act on parents to have that child in kindergarten at age five are monumental, but if it were eased up in terms of flexible entry, I think that would be one way of trying to solve that particular problem.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There are subsequent problems which were raised with some of our first presenters. If you move into that sort of semestered approach, how do you break out of it at some point.

I, like Mr. Keyes and I think other members of the committee, am becoming more fascinated with the subject but have no clear notion of where we go on it, except that there is a suggestion you do not deal with, but it is dealt with in another brief we will be getting this afternoon. It is that whatever we do within this, as we move towards change, it should be done on a pilot basis with good study and with no boards switching entirely to this kind of a system automatically. I presume that would be a cautionary note you would add to yours.

Nods, I announce for Hansard.

Madam Chairman: We have a habit of nodding during your questions, but we are actually agreeing with you, as opposed to any other motivation. Mr. Villeneuve has mentioned that he has a small question.

Mr. Villeneuve: Yes, a small question.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Beer has a question and he has not indicated its length.

Mr. Villeneuve: Ladies, thank you for representing the parents here. We will have many groups of teacher representatives later. I would like to ask you this question. The ripple effect would be that if we change anything in the school year, the school day would likely require additional teachers to those who are already in the system.

What is your feeling pertaining to teachers who do not have the official teaching certificate? I understand we have certain subjects that have a dire shortage of teachers. What is the reaction, if any–positive, negative or otherwise–from the parents' group that you represent.

Mrs. Bawden: I think our reaction or our policy would be that we want the best qualified teachers for every subject area and in every classroom. That is not much help, but that is what the parents want. They want the best qualified teachers available.

Mr. Villeneuve: This would be part of the ripple effect. Should we make any changes, be they in the day or the year, we will be requiring additional professionally trained teachers, so the reaction of the parents at this point is that, "You may want to do it, but do it with caution because we do want the best available people and right now we have a shortage of these particular people, for whatever reason."

Mrs. Bawden: And it may get worse.

Mr. Villeneuve: That is a consideration that this committee certainly has to face. It is a reality of the situation at present.

Mrs. McGuire: Please consider very carefully that ripple effect of people not being qualified.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. True to your word, you were very short.

Mr. Beer: I would like to come back to Mr. Johnston's earlier question in terms of the instructional and custodial aspect of the school. I am interested in the response that you get from your members with respect to the changing role of the school, apart from whether we are talking about extending the school day or the school year. We are clearly in the middle of some pretty substantial changes in terms of families and how families relate to their kids who are in the school system. Anyone who has taught, or who has a member of the family who is teaching, knows–as you talked about–the sorts of situations of some of the children, especially at the elementary level, the home life or what have you. Regardless of socioeconomic background you get some stories that certainly are not pleasant to hear, so we know there is an awful lot of change going on out there.

I guess one of the things that always comes up is: What is the role of the family? What is the role of the church? What is the role of the school? Those are the three elements that are always brought forward and it is always noted that the church no longer has the role that it used to in some respects, nor indeed does the family, because we cannot even define the family to a certain extent any more, at least not in the way that we used to. So we are left then, almost inevitably, with the school. Even if it is changing, none the less we look at the school down at the corner that was there maybe 20 years ago, or perhaps has just gone up, to help us in working out some of these problems and issues.

Within that context and as you have talked to your membership–because the threads in your comments and those from the group just before you I think are very similar in a number of ways, and that is telling us something that I think is important to know–what are people saying to you? What are the parents saying to you about this change, and who are the people who are responding to you? Are we a bit in danger here of hearing from more families where there is somebody who is able to be on a more flexible time schedule so that the family's role with the child after three o'clock can be meaningful? Are you hearing from single parents who are working and perhaps they have some kids in day care from six in the morning until five or six at night, or from parents, both of whom are working and could not do much with their children until close to five or six? Whom are you hearing from and what are they saying about the role that they see for the school? I think we are going to have to come to grips with this custodial and instructional dilemma, and there are all sorts of implications to that, but I would be interested in what feedback you are getting.

Mrs. Purvis: The majority of the parents whom we are representing are parents who have children at the elementary level, for starters, so we are looking at people dealing with younger children who need child care in some way or another.

I think, too, as we look at our membership spread across the province we are looking at a total cross-section of different family situations being represented: from the traditional family with the father working and the mother at home who has the opportunity and interest to be involved in the local school community, from that end of the spectrum through to single parents with children in school and they also are finding time to be involved in the school community.

I feel fairly comfortable about a representative point of view, and I was interested to hear the previous group mention it as well–the comment that we hear most often from our members is serious concern about the custodial role that the schools are having to take on. That concerns them, and I think it is perhaps fair to take that one step further to say that they feel this is overburdening the school system.

Mr. Beer: But presumably, if not the school, then who or what other institution? For many of them, they themselves would not be able to do that.

Mrs. Purvis: That is correct.

Mr. Beer: At that point then they are saying it is not that they have a problem that the school might do that, but it is having the resources and the kind of programming that would enable them to do it. Or are they concerned that the school as an institution just becomes too much of an entity in their kids' lives?

Mrs. Purvis: I think it has to do with the institutional aspect of it and that the responsibility outside the traditional school day is the parents' responsibility in terms of child care. The sense I get is that it should not be falling on the shoulders of the school system to provide that type of child care.

Mr. Beer: For some of those, there might be programs within a school but not necessarily run by the same people. Is that part of it?

Mrs. Purvis: There are, I think, a lot of examples where the school building is used for child care purposes both before school and after school, but it will be another agency or organization that is actually providing that service. The Young Men's Christian Association, for example, and the parks and recreation departments in some of the municipalities use school facilities, and that is great, but the responsibility for those programs and the organization and delivery of the programs is outside the responsibility of the school system.

Madam Chairman: I would sincerely like to thank the federation for the very stimulating and thought-provoking questions that you have asked today and for the discussion and some of the answers you have given back. We particularly welcome parental involvement, and we have been fortunate this morning to have two groups. Thank you very much for coming.

Mrs. Bawden: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: I just remind members before we adjourn that we have quite a full afternoon, so if possible, I would like to start as close to two o'clock as we can. The select committee on education shall stand adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 12:03 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:07 p.m. in room 151.

Madam Chairman: I would like to start this session of the select committee on education as we continue to look at the length and organization of the school day and the school year. If the members will all be seated, we will begin with our first presenter this afternoon, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. Please come forward. I was going to say welcome to the select committee on education, but I guess I should say welcome back to the select committee. We are very much looking forward to your words today. Just start by introducing yourself.

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr. Head: Before I begin, I would like to introduce our representatives because there is a slight change from what you have in front of you. I will start with the actual change and introduce our staff person, Mary Templin, who is replacing Jim Ross, I guess, who is on your list. Mary Templin was the chief researcher for our paper. On my left, your right, are Kim McCulloch and Doris St. Amand, our two vice-presidents. Behind us, as always, is our general secretary, David Eaton; and of course the ever-present photographer, Larry French, who needs no introduction.

I have a couple of comments I would like to make in the way of an introduction that is not in the paper. First of all, let me say that I think the March break, in many ways, highlighted the topic today in that, as you know, for many of us there were two March breaks. When we are talking about the school year and the school day, it seems to me that the March break and the Christmas break, with the discretionary powers the boards have to either change them when they are putting forward their school year plan or not consult in terms of jurisdictions, have caused some problems, I think specifically for families. I would like to highlight that.

We have received many concerns from families, not only from our members but from parents. What we have seen is that when you have elementary students and secondary students in your family, they can often be in cross-boundary jurisdictions within public boards or within separate school boards, and jurisdictional boundaries can determine, for instance when the March break will be or when the Christmas break will be. We heard more than ever this year of that kind of concern.

I think it is also true that because our separate school colleagues do not like to put the break up against Easter weekend, we saw many families where they had students in both separate and public schools being caught in that process. It affected a lot of people in some rather interesting combinations. I draw that to your attention.

I suppose, in one sense, it might be a useful topic in the future for us to look at–the whole concept of unified school boards–because this would end that kind of disruption and would invite the community to be involved in the same kinds of processes.

I am not being frivolous when I say that because I think we already are starting to see unified school boards develop across Ontario in terms of Ottawa-Carleton or Metro, where you have Bill 127, which is another model of a unified school board; or even in the Lincoln-Eden private school model. It is there. I think it is starting to develop and it is a topic that might be useful in the future for looking at duplications of service or teacher shortage problems, in special ed or technical ed. Those are areas that I think could be dealt with.

In terms of our presentation, we included our response to the select committee on your first report, which I thought was quite comprehensive. Since we sent that to you we have had our annual meeting. As a result of that annual meeting, we had a number of motions passed that very specifically told us to tell you that the secondary school teachers in the province in OSSTF right now are not in favour of destreaming without certain conditions. It is within that context, if you have that report with you, that I would like to make a couple of points.

We were very pleased with recommendations 18 and 23, which talked about resources. We would like to say that before you can get into destreaming, even on a pilot project, those are valid recommendations that we still would like you to push more with the ministry. We also will be presenting for your benefit, when it is published within the next few weeks, our document, which we call Present Challenges, New Directions, which will summarize all of those motions. We will provide that for you.

I would also like to say of those three points on page 2 in our overview, that any changes to the system are still, I think, valid in terms of what we

are going to say today about the school year and the school day. I would like to say that although we were concerned there were specific and definitive recommendations coming out of your first report, we still felt it was useful that you highlighted the problems. We would like to see the problems being highlighted so that we can talk about solutions together rather than sort of legislated solutions. I will not get into pensions and legislated solutions, but I can tell you that is an area we are not happy with. We would much rather have consensus, and I think that consensus will bring success.

In terms of the actual topic today, I am going to talk about only three areas in that because you have had, I think, an opportunity to read it. We would like to say first and foremost that we view change within this area as positive. We are not opposed to change in the school year or times in the school day. As a matter of fact, if you look at summer school and night school, in effect we have a successful extension of school year and school day already. Heritage language programs on Saturdays are another extension of something we already have. In many ways, that is slowly evolving and has been received because it has slowly evolved from a very positive point of view.

I would like to say that we have three concerns and they are highlighted throughout the report. The one major concern is our students. We think that first and foremost, any change in school year or school day should have to be judged purely on educational grounds, that it is not expediency or some sort of cost-effectiveness. We hope we have demonstrated throughout the paper that at first glance it would seem cost-effective, but is not necessarily so. We would like to be assured that any change in those two areas would be made because it would be an educational change that would be an advantage.

The second area we would like to talk about, which goes beyond the student, is in a sense the family. If you are looking at the brief, page 4 deals with parents. Our concern here is that traditional holiday periods–and we are in such a multicultural society that it cannot be ignored–would be disrupted. Probably even more vital is what I was referring to earlier, that day care provision becomes a major problem. That is why I was saying these cross-boundary jurisdictions and so on cause real problems for families.

If you go to page 8, you will see that we are concerned about continuing and adult education from that perspective as well. We have voiced for a number of years our concern about the two-level delivery of credit and grantable non-credit programs, through either day school or the continuing adult education program.

What I think needs to be noted is that continuing and adult education has been characterized by lower levels of pay for teachers, mainly because grantable noncredit programs are in the English-as-a-second-language area and are not always done in schools; and there are virtually invisible curriculum support structures because it is not within the traditional structures. Our concern also is in terms of the required per credit hours and the resources that would be available. So I think your first report is still relevant in this area.

We would like to see the arbitrary distinction between day school and continuing and adult education removed. I am hoping Bill 70 will see some opportunities for further discussions that will allow us to reach more of a consensus position on that.

Finally, I would like to go back to page 6, which is our concern in terms of a third area, which involves the support people who have to deliver the program and work within whatever structural change there is. We suggest that before we do that we would still like to see a pilot program carried out with specific assurances of workload protection for staff. By that, I do not mean just teachers.

There are collective agreements between the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, the Office and Professional Employees International Union and varieties of associations and unions that would have to be looked at. It just cannot be done holus-bolus. There would have to be some co-operation and discussions with those groups to make it work; and there is need of resource funding, particularly for curriculum design, staff training and instructional support material.

I know you are concerned about guidance personnel and that is a real problem for any change, because we are already finding in semestering that the turnaround period puts extra burdens on guidance and administrative staff.

Although we are in favour of these changes–we are not opposed to them–we would like to see them done in a way that would help us all work together on them. From our perspective, the protections we have listed throughout this brief are important. If I may, I would like to read into the record just the recommendations.

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1. Our first recommendation is that we look at the claims that are being made on year-round

schooling. Since we wrote this paper, we have found some new research. It is an ongoing revelation. Those claims, particularly in the area of student learning, need to be the subject of thorough and objective research before a pilot program is considered. I would say that most of the research here is United States research; it is not Canadian research. It is an area we need to look at carefully.

2. Any change to year-round schooling must be preceded by pilot programs. Teachers' federations must be partners in the development and assessment of the pilot programs. I will let the other unions speak for themselves, but we would include those as well.

3. Any change to year-round schooling must carry with it explicit protection for workload and the provision for adequate resource funding.

4. Any change to year-round schooling must be a local decision. The decision should be made within the context of a ministry regulation that should allow for maximum flexibility and maximum community and federation participation within controlled parameters necessary to preserve some consistency across the province.

I think sometimes we forget, when we are in large school board situations like the Metro jurisdiction, that we have a lot of rural schools and single-school communities. If students have to move out of those into other jurisdictions, then year-round schooling could be a problem.

5. The ministry should move to introduce more flexibility into the present structure by integrating day, summer and night school so that all credit and grantable noncredit courses receive the same level of support.

We do have a sixth recommendation. It is a hidden recommendation. It is our policies, in terms of appendix B, which is the Ontario Teachers' Federation policies on school year and school day. I think that gives you a consensus idea of where the five affiliates are. I would only highlight under point 2, "Rights and Responsibilities," item A(3), "that teachers have the right to teach in an educational environment conducive to quality education, including the following: (a) the right to a school year of not more than 194 days, of which at least nine are designated as professional activity days"–we consider that even more important if we are going to go into change–"(b) the right to time during school hours for planning, evaluation, and in-service training."

I am not going to suggest the other policies are not important; I just want to highlight those in terms of our brief.

In appendix C, under Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation policy, "Continuing and Adult Education," the designation "A.87" just means it was passed at our annual meeting in 1987. That is what that particular number means. It is the policy of OSSTF that local collective agreements should contain terms and conditions of employment for teachers of continuing adult education. It is policy that the workload of teachers who teach all or part of their timetable outside the regular day school program should be no greater than the workload of teachers who teach entirely in the regular day school program. We have outlined what that means.

Before I go to questions, I might ask if anyone feels I have left something out and would like to add a comment. No? Then we are happy to take any questions.

Madam Chairman: You are obviously very comprehensive as to your recommendations. Certainly as to the research you are absolutely right, there is very little in Canada. Most of the research that Bob Gardner and Ann Porter have come up with is from the United States, from California, Utah and some of the other states that have initiated studies.

You might be interested to know that we are going to have three people come up from the United States who are very involved in the year-round education aspect, from Utah and from California, on April 17 in committee room 2; April 18 and April 19 as well. We will be glad to give you those dates so that you can have somebody attend.

Mr. Head: One observation we have made is that even in that research in the United States it is often inner-city research, which in itself causes another dimension to be looked at because a lot of our schools are inner-city schools in the same proportion as perhaps they are in the US.

Madam Chairman: That is true, although there was one rural community, Oxnard, which is outside Los Angeles, where the whole county has gone to year-round education. When Bob and Ann went to California they actually visited the area and brought back a lot of research, so it was quite interesting. We will be happy to share that with you, as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think it was a very helpful brief from two perspectives.

One is that we might anticipate the federations to take very much a status quo kind of position: "This is one area where we don't need any change. There are enough problems in the system as it is. Let's not monkey around with things." So

the openness that is in the report in terms of discussing the issues is very welcome.

I think in terms of the recommendations, as I was saying to you just before we came on, Mr. Keyes this morning was suggesting that maybe what we would be doing would be raising more questions and alternatives than making direct recommendations at this stage. It may very well be that the maximum we would be talking about would be pilot projects. So I think the process thrust of what you are talking about is also extremely important to us as well at this point.

I think it would be important for the committee to share the documents that the research people have already pulled together for us with the various federations. I think they would find that interesting because there is such a dearth of information around, and none that is Canadian, to operate from. So I think it would be a useful process if we did that, as well. As we come around to making some decisions in mid- to late April, you would have a chance, if you wanted, through yourself, through Larry French or others, to let us know your opinions on any of the information as you get it from us as well, if you find it useful.

There are a couple of things that have come up at this point that I wanted to raise with you. When Walter Pitman was here he raised the whole question about what we are doing in the school and that we look at that before we start really talking about the arbitrary times or the length of the school day or the length of the year.

He started differentiating for us between the custodial responsibilities of the school as they are evolving and the instructional responsibilities of the school. There is some argument to be made in some people's minds that the instructional length of the day can actually be reduced, but the custodial day is either seen as problematic in terms of the child care responsibilities of the teacher and the institution–as compared with the parental responsibilities–or as a challenge in terms of making that more creative and another learning mode for students.

You did not address it directly in your brief itself, although you allude to it in a couple of your OSSTF motions that you have already passed in terms of extracurricular time; the way community projects should be incorporated in the school system and that kind of thing.

Do you see that a longer school year or a differently organized school year might allow more flexibility in those two areas, one in terms of instructional time or what is known as classroom time versus other kinds of learning modalities that might be taken on by the school in its various forms–given what you are saying, as well, that compensation for that in terms of the teachers, and the support, etc. for that should be there?

Mr. Head: I am sort of hearing some responses here; let me start off.

We are just finalizing what we call our "good schools study"–what makes a school particularly unique and maybe better than some others of comparable size and so on. One of the things that is definitely in that is that the extracurricular dimension is part and parcel of the curriculum as much as the instructional environment and the quality education. You cannot discount that. I guess if you take the example of sort of fast-tracking under OSIS, you can go through the system very fast if you want just that sort of educational component, or you can take a little longer and get another type of enrichment as well.

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In one sense, it depends on what parents and students want out of the system. In another sense, the teachers certainly would welcome opportunities for upgrading and more professional development. For instance, one model of the school year is the four-quarter model. If you were to teach three quarters and then back it up so that you were off for one quarter, and then back up your three quarters in the following year so that the two quarters matched, in effect you could have half a year off and that would allow for degree work and things like that. The problem then is that you have to have universities that are also flexible at that level, so it is a very complicated thing.

I am not sure if I answered your question entirely, because I do not know if there is a concrete answer. Maybe Mary or Doris or Kim might like to answer.

Ms. St. Amand: If I might, Mr. Johnston, we raise this on page 4, if you want to look under "program," where we talk about it, especially at the secondary level. I think this is one of the key areas of concern that we have, that the nature of subject-based scheduling and single-class options and the allocation of instructional staff make the multitrack version of the year-round school very complex. We think it could very likely reduce option choice for one or more of the tracks. I think we tried to address the concern that we have in terms of scheduling in that section.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have two other things, if I might. One of the assertions by the

proponents of year-long schooling or however you want to call it–I do not find the term useful because it is not year-long schooling; they still get as many weeks off, it is just that they get them in different kinds of allotments.

But the proponents say that one of the advantages is for disadvantaged kids, and one of the reasons the inner-city example is there and is positively posited by these people is the sense that the huge break from June till September–and using September as the month of revision, or sometimes May as the month of revision before the summer–loses a lot of time and kids lose information as well; and that having a shorter break, a month's break, that kind of thing, helps them pedagogically to retain more and to be prepared to move on in a better fashion. Do you have any commentary on that? On the one hand it seems to make some sense; on the other hand it seems that it is simplistic.

Mr. Head: I will make one point, and then I am going to turn it over to Mary, who was discussing this very point today. Some research that I was reading over the break suggested that reinforced educational opportunities do just as much. For instance, if you do an instructional unit and test it right then, and then test it with the same test only a couple of weeks later, those who had the test immediately do better than those who did not. So retention is not just continuity; it is also some instructional techniques that can be useful too. I think we are finding in semestering that some of that can be addressed. Mary, you might like to share some of that research we were talking about today on that point.

Ms. Templin: Just very briefly and with all due deference to the researchers for the committee, the bulk of the research that I have seen is, at the very best, inconclusive in terms of the improvement in a student's retention rate.

It may well be that disadvantaged students will find greater benefit in the more frequent and shorter vacation periods than others. I would like to say two things about that. First, in the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation we would really like to have these basic premises investigated so that we know what we are dealing with, and if we are trying to go into a pilot project we know why and we can tailor it for that particular purpose. There are a great many unfounded generalities and unexamined premises when people speak of year-round schooling, I think.

Second, I do not think we should forget that in Ontario we have these well-established summer schools and night schools. I just want to say again that we do not need pilot projects and we do not need major reallocations of school years in order to provide year-round programs for students who need them. We have all those facilities there. We just simply need to use them and use them better.

Ms. St. Amand: On page 4 again, if you look under section 2, programming, we pick up this whole notion of the difference in learning loss. A lot of research has been done in that area, and that research seems to suggest that the greatest loss in learning occurs in the period immediately after the completion of the learning and then the loss rate decelerates. So the difference between learning loss in a three-week break, for example, and the traditional summer holiday, may not be as great as one might think otherwise.

Mr. Head: I think Kim has some research to share with you too.

Mr. McCulloch: Just to add to what has been said, if we come back to the basic premise that any changes in the area of school day or school year should be based on student achievement or lack of achievement, improving that, if we keep that focus very clear then it appears to me that we would have to examine very, very closely all the parameters of any pilot project that we were going to embark upon in the first place. Whatever evidence there is does not point to any significant improvement in student achievement either way. Given that, one would have to be very careful on the selection of the school, the selection of the system, and be very clear on the purposes of tampering with the status quo.

Having gone through all that very careful preliminary research, then there might be a very good reason to embark on a pilot. But at this point, as I say, there does not appear to be the evidence to support the fact that student achievement is going to be significantly affected.

Mr. Head: That seems to be borne out in the National Education Association study of September 1987 on year-round schools. It is there, what they call data search number 8.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Some of the information out of Oxnard is kind of interesting in terms of the seemingly positive effects, but it is quite different for some of the inner-city schools in Los Angeles. I find I am dealing, as I did with some parents this morning, almost facetiously around the notion of our being so pedagogically bound. I think it is important that we look at this in terms of outcomes rather than organizational changes, but the assumptions about the pedagogical validity of our present system are a little mind-boggling as well.

It seems to me the present system was established on sociological grounds, not on pedagogical grounds, so I do not think we should be absolutely scared off by the notion of looking at something different as well. It was an agrarian economy that basically got us into our present system, and it may or may not be the best way to learn. I have no fixed view of it.

An obvious area of change that is taking place is work, students and work, from all sorts of sides of things, just in terms of more and more kids using part-time work in high school through to the need for a financial base before they go on to universities in our present system, that kind of thing. The potential dangers of changing the system around the economic component for students and their families, around work, forgetting the industries that rely on them at the moment, is something that I wonder a little bit about. Have you done much thinking about the positive or negative effects that changing the structure might have in terms of work?

Mr. Head: The major research would suggest there is an optimum number of hours that the average number of people can work before it starts to affect their schooling, somewhere between 12 and 20 hours. From that perspective, if you really want to be involved in the school, in the whole school climate, work will affect it. But you know, there are also some people who have to work in order to stay in school, so that has to be weighed. By and large, I would say as an average we are not in favour of large blocks of time for work during school; however, that is under the traditional structure we have right now and that could possibly change if we had a more flexible structure.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am just wondering if that would be substantially different from what it seems to be at the moment, in that with the semester system and the fast-tracking of OSIS and some of the options students seem to be taking, they seem to be taking fewer courses, for instance, and doing an extra year in high school to what maybe they really require in terms of getting their credits and doing some work.

I guess what I am asking is, would it really change things in terms of that phenomenon that is taking place of more students working longer hours? If we change the structure, do you think it would make it worse, do you think it would make it better, do you think there is enough flexibility in both systems that students will follow the other social and economic pressures that are getting them to do that in the first place no matter how we structure the school day and school year?

Mr. Head: The only thing I could say is that if you really believe that we should have a continuous educational system, then one could postulate that you should have a 24-hour school so that people who are working in the day will have the opportunity to increase their education.

Different countries do that differently. In some countries they make provisions for actual work during the day of instruction, so there is a block of time for work and there is a block of time for school and they incorporate that right in it. It seems to work fine. But that also suggests too that they have the idea that it is a continuous, lifelong learning process.

I would simply say yes, I think it will change and the flexibility will do that, but we do not have enough evidence to suggest that.

Mr. McCulloch: In Ontario, of course, we have fast-growing co-operative education programs, so we know there are opportunities now within the traditional system for students to have an exposure to work, I suppose, to a far greater degree than perhaps in the past. I am not sure if that is exactly what you are referring to.

The other end of this picture about students and work is the impact on the whole community and on families. Just imagine some revolutionary change in the way the school year is arranged or the school day is arranged. How does the rest of the community adjust, because it would have to, I would think, to some degree, adjust to all of that? How do industries suddenly readjust their vacation periods or their down times and all the rest of it to accommodate it? That is a pretty complex area. Whether or not it would affect student attitudes with regard to taking employment that lasts 20, 30 or 40 hours a week, and that happens on occasion I suppose, that is an unknown.

Mr. Beer: I have one short question and one perhaps a bit longer. I was just wondering, on this particular issue, have you had any direct discussions with your equivalents in California, Utah or any American group of teachers who have been involved in a year-round program, in terms of what their feeling was from the teachers' perspective? We had some of that in the information we received, and there was a video that was provided as well which had a number of teachers expressing their thoughts about it, but I just wondered if you had had any feedback on a kind of teacher-to-teacher basis.

Mr. Head: I am sure that there probably has been some, but it has not been documented in a

way that would be useful. We do have one member of staff who was on a sabbatical a few years ago who did certainly investigate some of that, John Butkovitch; but to the best of my knowledge we have not got anything concrete that is useful. We have the research.

Mr. Beer: Right. It was more that sometimes anecdotal talking can elicit some other–

Mr. Head: I am not aware of anything specific there.

Mr Beer: I think one of the things that is clear, and Richard mentioned it as well, is that as we pursue this one has probably more questions than answers, and clearly this is not something where it would be fair to say we are going to suddenly say that tomorrow morning the Ontario system should go entirely to a year-round system.

In terms of expanding and perhaps looking at some developmental models that might be of value to bring into the province, if you think of some of the changes we have brought in over the last few years–we do have different models: the semester, the regular year and the schools that go Monday, Wednesday and Friday and then Tuesday, Thursday and the following Monday in terms of the way they are set up. You mentioned, quite correctly, the night schools and summer schools. We perhaps have more variety in the system than we might think, albeit it has grown up willy-nilly.

Even if pedagogically one could not demonstrate that this kind of system would make any great difference in student achievement, I suppose it would be true to say it could increase the options that were before people, and that as society continues to change in a variety of ways, there might be value in at least providing within school boards some kind of option, year-round, that would not be exactly the way we have it. In other words, the pedagogical reason would not necessarily be predominant, but there might be some other societal benefits and no cost in a pedagogical sense.

I want to be clear on this: Are you looking at this as something you would accept only if you saw a pedagogical value to it, or do you simply want to make sure that if we bring in some kind of system it is not going to hurt the student or the existing system?

Mr. Head: I think you are trying to say that it is a pretty complex issue and that you cannot isolate just one factor. I think the majority of people, when they think of year-round schooling, think there is cost-saving attached to it, but when you start to investigate it there are a lot of other costs that are very hidden and soon become evident. There is a kind of check and balance system built into it. Whatever you do, you are going to cause a disruption.

We are not saying societal value should not be considered; it certainly should, there could be a lot of positive value from that perspective. What we are saying is that we do not want to see pedagogy undermined. We do not want to see that educational component not looked at in some way. I think it should be demonstrated that (a) it has to be at least as good and (b) that everybody knows what the potential hazards are. I have seen some pretty overt changes where it was only after the change that all these problems started to be generated. We would rather see it the other way around.

Mr. Beer: If we wanted to consider developing some pilot projects, or perhaps a particular school board was interested and felt there would be a positive response within its community, how would you see proceeding, what kind of structure? You have touched on it in your brief, but in elaborating on how that school would function, what kind of work would you do?

Mr. Head: We would like to see the co-operative model develop; what we call the collegial model, I suppose, if you want some jargon, which is that the school board, the community, students, teachers, people who have to work in the school–everybody from cafeteria people to caretakers and secretaries–has some input as to his or her commitment to it. If you have that commitment, then I think you have the basis for something that can be very positive. Co-operative education took a long time to develop, but by people really working at that commitment it eventually became very positive.

I think it is a collegial model in almost any change, because when you have the commitment you almost have a Hawthorn effect for success.

Madam Chairman: Thanks, Mr. Beer. We have just over five minutes left and we have a couple of questioners, so I think we have time for one from Mr. Keyes and one from Mrs. Cunningham.

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Mr. Keyes: I will try to keep it brief. There are two things. Perhaps Mr. Johnston suggested it, but it would be advantageous to both sides to exchange the research bibliography used, because I think in society we each tend to highlight those parts of the research that support the type of approach our organization may want to take.

As I said earlier this morning, we want to be sure this is only the very first phase in trying to

get the public at large to look at changes. I have a tendency to feel that while you made a beautiful statement–I wrote down at the beginning that you felt there was a positive potential in this consideration of change in the school day and the year–that did not come across that well in your brief. My assessment of reading it was much more one of caution, that it presented to me a small-c conservative approach as if to ask, "Are you really sure there is any merit in going further on it and doing a pilot program?"

I would ask, number one, that we exchange the research bibliographies we have used. As a second comment, you said it might well be that it would require major adjustments by business, industry, etc. I think we would have to say that the patterns we see today in business and industry have probably been adopted because of the school as we have set it up. They might very well be interested partners in seeing how they could function much better if they had more flexibility than they have today.

You have said we would have to be worried about all the summer tourist operators, "Where are they going to get their help?" We never seem to have any concern about the winter tourist operators who are becoming every bit as much in vogue as the summertime operators. They are probably the ones crying for assistance. If everyone started looking at the whole idea of change, we might find more acceptance of the flexibility it provides than what we have seen the agrarian-based school year allows.

The other point that seemed a bit weak to me was on staffing with regard to your opportunity for retraining and so on. I do not have the numbers. There are many people who take those courses, but I think the other breaks I have seen–on courses, the principals' course has dropped back from the traditional number of weeks it used to be to less time because they felt it could be covered in less time. Perhaps the shorter periods of time would provide for more in-depth courses for teachers, which would be advantageous to the whole in-service training, the retraining, the upgrading of certificates, etc., with three-week or four-week breaks. They would be able to take one of those three-week or four-week breaks for that aspect of it and still have perhaps two more in the course of their year to recharge their batteries, that type of thing.

Mr. Head: I do not think we disagree at all. You are probably right. We have struck a cautionary tone. On just the example you are using about summertime help versus wintertime help, for every move you make you are going to have those kinds of positive and negative things happen. That is all we are trying to say. We have such an ingrained situation that it is not so easy to make those changes. But if we are going to make them, let's at least understand what the outcomes will be. I apologize if it seems to be conservative. We are seldom called that.

Mr. Keyes: It is small-c.

Mrs. Cunningham: Is this upsetting to you?

Mr. Keyes: In the small-l, liberally minded province that we have here, it is nice to progress forward.

Mr. Head: All I want to say is that we are not opposed to change in this area at all, but once you have said that it is hard to construct a brief without looking at the results of that change.

Mrs. Cunningham: I have a couple of comments. If you could promise the public that no one would be in a portable classroom and that everybody could still have family vacations together, we would have year-round schools. Those are the big things that come out in any studies that have been done. "If I can still go on holidays, the whole family together, and nobody will be in a portable, let's do it." I do not think you can do that today, but it is a beginning.

Mr. Head: We would give it a try.

Mrs. Cunningham: Yes. Would it not be great?

When you mentioned the 400 schools in the United States, were they elementary or secondary or a fair split? What was it?

Ms. Templin: My belief is that the majority of them were elementary. The system appears to be more popular with elementary schools than with secondary schools, probably because of the more complicated timetabling and the subject selection timetabling in the secondary schools. I would guess we have about 300 elementary to about 100 secondary. Those are not precise figures, but I think that is about the ratio.

Mrs. Cunningham: That is interesting. My guess would have been that if you were looking at the needs of students and curriculum you would probably go more with the secondary, but that is just my guess.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: In California, because there are a lot more feeder schools to high schools, so that you have three public schools, elementary schools, feeding into that high school, they have to have them co-ordinated or you could not make the secondary work as well.

Mrs. Cunningham: They also have better weather. We have to remember that if we are looking at cost savings.

I wonder if anybody has seen any data on whether or not the semester system is working in Ontario.

Mr. Head: We do have some studies that suggest it is working. We know there are some problems with it too, but since OSIS the increase of semestering has thrown some of those studies out, so I think we really need to re-examine that issue. I think that is a very good point.

Mrs. Cunningham: That is what we are talking about, is it not?

Mr. Head: Yes.

Mrs. Cunningham: With regard to a semester system, if we are going year-round, and we do not know whether it is working now or not, then I suppose it is not a very smart move till we know what we have.

The second point I would like to make, one that would support one of the responses to a question, is on this co-operative education. Has anybody done any studies on the retention rate, whether or not we could have students going year-round if they were in co-operative education courses and the private sector were working with us? That seems to me to make good sense. Year-round schooling may be just perfect for many courses. You made that comment. Respond in some way, if you like, but it seems to me it makes good sense. It is like having a job and going to school at the same time and staying in school. Has anybody looked at the retention rate?

Mr. Head: I think it is being looked at, but you get some very funny anomalies. For instance my own board, which is the Scarborough Board of Education, tends to use advanced-level students for co-operative educational projects and programs. Just across the border in North York they tend to be more highly oriented towards general-level programs. So you have a variety of data there. But we support co-operative education to the extent that we have even gone into our excellence in education programs, where we have suggested that unions, companies and organizations like hospitals pair up with schools and use those back and forth relationships to keep students interested and in school.

Mrs. Cunningham: What about sports, music and drama where we have camps going all summer long in many of the boards across the province? That is another form of year-round school.

Mr. Head: True.

Mrs. Cunningham: I think what the public is frightened of is–first of all, everybody thinks that if you have year-round school nobody will be in a portable; let's face it, that is what they are worried about, that the kids are going into portables. Other people are more concerned about child care. These are all issues you have to face up front.

If you are really looking at the needs of the students, I am not a bit surprised to hear you say that we have co-operative work at both levels. If you were to go to the community colleges right now they would tell you they are really looking for general-level and basic-level kids to get in there–para-apprentice or whatever you want to call them–-that there is room for everybody.

If that is the kind of model the school systems could come up with–the one thing I cannot stand is this thing called a pilot project; I think there is so much going on out there right now that if we could just sit there and look at what is happening already and put it together we would not have to do these pilot projects. Boards could get into what they call year-round school for certain kids but not call them pilot projects.

I would like to say that I thought this was quite an inclusive brief and I would like to thank you for that. I certainly have more questions, but there is not the time now.

Madam Chairman: I would also like to thank our delegation for a fine presentation. As usual, OSSTF has made an excellent contribution to our committee.

Our next delegation today will be from the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation. Mr. Martin and Mr. Lennox, could you come forward, Welcome back to our committee. It is a pleasure to have you with us today. Could you identify yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard and begin whenever you are ready.

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ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr. Martin: I am Bill Martin, first vice-president of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation. The gentleman on my left does not need introduction; he is David Lennox, our secretary. He has been around these halls a number of years, as we all know.

The Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation welcomes the opportunity to address the members of the select committee on education on the topic of the length of the school year and the length of the school day.

Last year, Peel district put forward a resolution to our annual meeting to investigate year-round education. I think the impetus of the reason for

Peel district doing so was the rapid growth that is occurring in that particular area. As a result, a task force was set up and studies have taken place over the current year.

The recommendations have now been presented to the executive and the OPSTF provincial executive approved the statement on page 1 as the federation's definition of year-round education. You can see it is broken down into four basic sections. We still maintain that 185 days of instruction should be held throughout the course of the year. However, it would be continuous and would not be in set blocks as we currently have.

There are various calendar arrangements that allow educators to work with a greater number of students in a limited space. Studies in San Diego show that up to 25 per cent more students can be instructed as a result of year-round education.

It also provides the students with more opportunities for remediation or enrichment. As a public school teacher who sometimes goes to the school in August, I have had children knocking at the door: "Can we come back to school now?" I believe with the shorter periods of time, as far as vacation is concerned, these students would be able to continue in enrichment or remediation throughout the course of the year.

I think it also allows educators to realign their calendar in order to be able to fulfil their standard school year contract. I am not one who likes the cold up here in Canada, so if we ever went to year-round education I would know what blocks of time I would probably be seeking to be employed in.

Mrs. Cunningham: You and 100 per cent of the others.

Mr. Martin: There might be a rash.

Page 2 of our brief: We are guided by the policies that are approved by our annual meetings. In 1980, the annual meeting did in fact approve a policy on the experimental school if it were to be under consideration by a school board.

The policy has been followed by some boards. I know that the North Shore Board of Education, for example, takes a week short as far as vacation in the summer is concerned so that it can end up with a two-week March break. It has been used mainly in the northern parts of the province.

We believe, though, as a branch affiliate, that the branch affiliate must also play an active role in the process if an experimental year is being considered. If you follow through, there are some key words in the policy as stated on page 2. First of all, we strongly believe that parent input is essential in making any formal decision on a year-round school year. We also request that it be approved annually by a majority vote of the teachers. We believe the input there is essential.

A number of branch affiliates may work in a specific system, and we believe all branch affiliates would have to be in favour of the proposal that was put forward. We also maintain that 185 teaching days and a minimum of nine professional activity days should be part of any change.

I think the very last point on page 3 is extremely important, and that is the evaluation process. If we are going to go into any change as far as the school year we currently have in our educational system is concerned, I believe there has to be an evaluation take place at the end. I believe the evaluation also has to be completed by all parties involved in determining what the school year was going to be in the first place.

Page 4: The task force also looked into the advantages and disadvantages that would occur as a result of year-round education. If you look at the advantages, and these basically reflect the definition we have at the beginning of our brief, it would definitely provide continuous education for children. As has already been mentioned, 25 per cent more students would be able to be maintained in a single building. Again, being a grade 5 teacher, I know the amount of time I have to spend in review when my children come back from their summer vacations. I believe that the amount of review time would be minimized with shorter vacation periods.

The studies in San Diego show that there has been a reduction in absenteeism, and that is probably because they realize they do not have such a long period of time to go between vacation times and as a result would be more apt to stick it out to the end of an instructional period before the vacation time was able to kick in.

It would also provide flexibility for families when arranging vacations; and I heard tourism mentioned in the last presentation. This affiliate could see that it would probably lead to year-round tourism if year-round education was in fact implemented.

Whatever the advantages, though, there are also a number of disadvantages. Whether or not our country and our climate are conducive to year-round education, I believe that there would have to be a number of changes in the physical structures of our plant. The installation of air-conditioning would be definitely a necessity. I have sat in my classroom in June when it is 95 degrees, and I would not want to be sitting in there in August.

Also, with respect to extracurricular activities, we usually have a number of programs that take place throughout the school systems, and year-round education could inhibit this from taking place to its maximum.

Day care would also have to be looked into; and if we ever ended up with a family on different schedules we would have a major problem. If my son was on one track and my daughter was on another and I was on another in working and we tried to get a holiday together some time, this would definitely create major problems.

Lifestyles would be altered, because I do believe that a lot of the people in Ontario at this particular time are traditionalists and they look forward to their summer vacation. They have their summer homes up north, and probably changes in that would not be acceptable to a large number of these people.

On page 5–basically I think the best place to look would be on page 6–we have tried to look at an overview of year-round education as far as the implications are concerned. We have tried to break our chart down into basically six areas. Although the "Federation" one did not have much to do as far as the select committee is concerned, I think the other broad areas definitely do have great implications as far as year-round education is concerned.

If you look under the "External" section, all those areas would have to be taken into consideration in any form of year-round education, from industry and tourism all the way down to classroom assistance and exchange programs which currently exist in our educational system.

I think we would also have to look at the working conditions. We are all under collective agreements, and those collective agreements would have to be adjusted in order to be able to accommodate year-round education. Teachers may wish to teach beyond the number of days they are currently doing; modifications would have to take place in collective agreements in order for this to come about.

I think we also have to look at the family and think of child care and travel and holidays and also the family groupings.

Under "Board/Ministry Programs" there are numerous areas which would have to be taken into account if year-round education was implemented.

Finally, there is the plant. We have mentioned air-conditioning and bus drivers, secretarial help, custodial help, etc. When are those rooms going to be painted if we do not close our schools down in the summer so that they can be done and we do not have to go into our buildings the next day and inhale fumes because they were painted the night before?

The second part of the brief is on page 7, the length of the school day, and again we have policies which OPSTF follows as far as length of the school day is concerned. Broken down into two parts, the maximum instructional day for teachers should be no more than five hours and the maximum length of the school instructional program for pupils should also be five hours.

I think everyone here realizes that although it states in our policy five hours, the working day of a teacher is far longer than the five hours that he is in front of his classroom. We have report cards. We have new curriculum documents which are being constantly laid on us by boards and ministry. We have extracurricular activities that we run. If we are doing our job properly, which we do, there is the conferencing with parents. There are numerous activities which extend the teachers' day well beyond the five hours they are in front of the classroom.

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We also have to think in terms of the students. Being a resident in Peel and knowing the number of students who are bused to schools in Peel, I am aware that some of these young pupils are on the buses at 7:30 in the morning and they do not get home until 4:30 or five o'clock at night. It makes a fairly long day for those youngsters, as well as being instructed five hours in a classroom.

In conclusion, on page 8, I believe that OPSTF believes the current school year is working well. We are not coming here to criticize what we currently have in existence we are quite satisfied; however, we are always looking for innovation and change.

We have policies, as has been stated in the brief, which our members are expected to follow, and in any experimental school year being considered hopefully those policies would be taken into account.

We also believe that models should be developed and analysed. We should not jump into this holus-bolus and should be very cautious in working into any specific form as far as year-round education is concerned.

We leave you with some recommendations on page 9.

I believe the first recommendation is extremely important because it forms a basis for discussion. If we create models and these models are created by the individuals who would be involved in year-round education, then those models could be discussed and probably a lot of

the problems would be eliminated if year-round education was in fact implemented.

Our second recommendation refers to student achievement: because if we are not doing this to improve student achievement why are we doing it? We do not believe that the increase in space that would be created is a reason for year-round education. Increasing capital expenditure would also increase the amount of space which is required for this to take place.

The Ministry of Education also should invite school boards to participate in pilot projects on year-round education and we believe they should be funded by the ministry. I believe the pilot projects are extremely important, and again our evaluation of the pilot project would be to see whether or not in fact student achievement was improved, learning was better and there were actual benefits from year-round education.

As far as the school boards are concerned, prior to participating we recommend that there be input, from the federations, from the public, from the trustee organizations, from business and industry, from all areas which generally would be affected if year-round education were in fact to be implemented, and that those groups would have an opportunity to participate in the implementation and the management as the plan was put into effect throughout the pilot year.

Again, we recommend the maintaining of 185 days in the experimental school year and a minimum of nine professional activity days also to be included.

I think the key in recommendation 9 is that if we ended up with projects in selected schools, if there were students or teachers who did not wish to be involved at schools selected for year-round education, there would be alternative arrangements for the students and teachers unable to comply with the experimental school year that was being proposed.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and would be pleased to take any questions at this time.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lennox, do you have any comments before we go to members' questions?

Mr. Lennox: I never try to upstage my first vice-president.

Madam Chairman: I am to take that as a negative, right? I thought Mr. Martin was being very diplomatic in calling it an experimental school year instead of a pilot project, in deference to Mrs. Cunningham's sensitivities, but I notice in your recommendations you came out with the dreaded P words several times. You got them both in.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is true David has been around here longer than members of the committee, as far as I know, other than myself probably. It is showing on him; but that is another matter, we can come back to that later.

I have a couple of things. The first is staff. I think it would be very important first maybe to get some information. I have not done this now for weeks, right? It would be appropriate to initiate it today.

We are talking a lot about how society has changed and that sort of thing, and there are a lot of assumptions about what holidays people take and that kind of thing. We know the Employment Standards Act says there are two weeks mandatory. It would be really interesting to know if we can get statistics through the other government ministry that would be appropriate here to find out when people take their holidays and for how long do they take their holidays.

Is the phenomenon of the mother with the children going to the cottage for the entire summer still a phenomenon that is taking place; or is that gone, as one might presume, anecdotally, that it is? Do people spend more than a month at a summer cottage any more? I would be very interested to know if that reality is there or whether or not the kind of assumptions we are making are maybe dated at this point.

If we can have that kind of statistical information, who takes winter holidays versus summer holidays and that kind of thing, which perhaps the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation has through surveys it must have done, one would presume, it would be an interesting backdrop for us as we move along.

Madam Chairman: Are you requesting this of our own research staff or of the ministry?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am suggesting that our staff make the–

Mr. Mahoney: You want the committee to go to Muskoka for the summer, is that it? Do our own survey?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I want to see if we can stand it in Muskoka for 60 days.

Interjections.

Madam Chairman: I think I have lost control here. Mr. Johnston, you were saying?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is so easy. I just mention the word "holiday" and they all start frothing, having all just come back from one.

Mr. Furlong: Ask them first about the people who can afford a cottage.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I agree with you, or perhaps a home in Toronto; but that is another matter.

Let's go to a couple of things. Your North Shore example struck me as something that maybe should make us take some old blinkers off in terms of what is actually happening out there and what the reality is of being in a northern climate and when you want to take your holidays. In fact, if the North Shore of Lake Superior decides that it wants more time in the winter to help it survive the winter and takes the March break as a double week, there is something to be learned from that, it seems to me, in terms of our presumptions about when people want their breaks and how they want them orchestrated. I think that was a very important little point that you made.

Can I ask you what the assumption is to establish 185 days of schooling is appropriate? I do not know. I am asking, as a wide-eyed innocent, why we presume that.

Mr. Mahoney: Wild-eyed, did you say?

Mrs. O'Neill: It is impossible, Richard, for you to feign innocence.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Well, wide-eyed; as wide-eyed as I can possibly get my crinkles at the moment.

Why is it that 185 days has developed into such a sacrosanct concept? What is its pedagogical root?

Mr. Martin: I will not go the pedagogical route; I will go with the Ancient Mariner on that part.

Interjections.

Mr. Mahoney: Do you want to upstage him now?

Mr. Lennox: I think I do.

Mr. Martin: Having been a teacher for 20 years, basically teaching the grade 5 area, I have no problem with 185 days. I cannot answer the question of where the number came from; however, I can tell you that I can cover the curriculum in 185 days and I really do believe that the students look forward to the periods of time that they have.

I do not think they would like to go beyond the 185. Well some of them would, definitely, and that is why we are talking in terms of intersessions with remediation and enrichment; but as far as dealing with the average child is concerned I believe 185 days of instruction for a school year is adequate.

David will probably be able to tell us where it came from.

Mr. Lennox: Back in the early days of my career, when there was a little grey book that ran education for Ontario, you were not allowed to start school until the day after Labour Day and you ended school on the Friday before the last day of June. At that time, it worked out to be something in the neighbourhood of 194 to 196 days, depending on when the wind changed the seasons and the sun came up.

What occurred was that with the teaching year ranging from that 194 to 196 days, professional activity days then were legislated, which took nine days from 194 days, bringing it back to the 185 days on just a straight mathematical progression.

The fundamental concept—and I do not want to tell you how long ago that goes—was Labour Day, from the agrarian society aspect of it that being the official day, and the end of June. What occurred with the North Shore Board of Education was that when this standard model in Ontario did not fit, it then had to write to the ministry for an experimental school, which several boards have done. They have reached into the August period, before September 1, which has raised some interesting questions in the teachers' collective agreements.

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Can I expand on this for a second? Inasmuch as the teachers' contract goes from September 1 to August 31, we therefore had the situation that in every one of the experimental school years we had to arrange that new teachers started the last week of August, even though the contract did not start until September 1, and that teachers who were leaving the profession or retiring could leave and not be in breach of their contract if they did not come back on August 23. We had to look at those aspects of it. That is the basis of the 185 days.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It strikes me there is a chicken-and-egg thing to do with your being able to deal with the curriculum in 185 days. It seems to me the curriculum is also now designed for the 185-day period as well as 185 days being the time in which it is possible to deal with the curriculum. I guess what I am still not clear about in my own mind is what the range is around the world on this at the moment. Are we at the forefront of looking at change from that old agrarian-based notion and precept? Is it because we have had traditions of collective bargaining agreements for decades and are now locked into this?

Are those the things that are going to keep us at this 185-day period or should there not be another

rationale for that? In other words, should the same rationale that says we should not be changing until we are sure the kids are going to benefit be our rationale as well for examining why it is we are using what we are using at the moment, rather than the fact that you can deal with the present curriculum the way it is organized within that time frame at this stage? Do we know what the worldwide status on this is? Do we have that information?

Mr. Martin: I know the San Diego studies are based on–I believe it is 180 days; the breakdown they have down in San Diego is 180 days, we are at 185. With the extension to the 240, which is suggested in the brief, the enrichment activities that would be available to students and the remediation that is also going to be available to the students, I think, would be far better than extending the 185 days which are currently there. There are a lot of students who are behind as far as reading or whatever subject area you are looking at at the elementary level is concerned. A lot of these students also need a lot of enrichment. I think those additional days that would come about as a result of year-round education would be far more beneficial than extending the 185 days so that everybody is going to have to go beyond that period of time.

Mr. Lennox: I want to make one more key point, if I could. You have to start working backwards from the fact that the maximum of 52 weeks a year at five days a week gives you only 260 days to begin with. Then you take out the holidays–that is, statutory holidays–and you get back down to about 240 days. Now let's talk about the break in the school year and you are down to 200 days and not far off the 194 we have now with the professional activity days. So if we are looking to moving the 185 towards 200 or 210, I think the key that Mr. Martin was trying to address is that you have some structural situations.

I have always found in my years of being principal of a school that the teachers' performance and the students' learning went on a bit of a wave, that you could start them in September and go September, October and November. You would hit tests, exams and so forth and then there would be that need for sort of time to catch your breath. Then you start the next wave. The breath time would be the Christmas break and then you would start again in January with another wave through to March. I think you have to consider that it is not 185 days with straight-up peak performance across the 185 days. I think a more flexible school year could bring about higher student achievement, higher productivity.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Useful comments. One final thing, if I might: A comment that you do not have in here, which I had expected frankly, is some commentary on the question of entry time into the school system for young kids, which at the moment is all based on birth dates at this stage. As we know, it has very little to do with the developmental capacities of children.

Do you see a major advantage of moving to a reorganized school year having more flexibility for dealing with natural developmental levels of kids as they come into the system; or do you see that as not being significant?

Mr. Lennox: I can make a comment on that. On our chart on page 6, about two thirds of the way down, in the top right-hand corner, we did comment under "Board/Ministry Programs" on the entrance age of junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten. We did not specify it in the main context, but we have identified it.

In response to your question about the change in the school year, if we are going to do that, then we have to have made a commitment to a model of continuous progress, at least in a large unit of learning, be it junior kindergarten to grade 3. I will not go beyond that for a moment.

When we start talking about the entrance age of students, be it at any one of the starts of a school year, whether there would be two starts, three starts or four starts, we cannot ever fall back into a lockstep method with junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten students, who come in with 25 different backgrounds, 25 different learning rates, 25 different maturities and from 25 different households. We cannot say, "Now you must jump this hoop into grade 1."

So we have to make sure that we do not do one without the other; but yes, a different entrance age for junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten would be beneficial.

Mrs. Cunningham: Do not get too excited about my negative attitude towards pilot projects, but I was a school board trustee for 15 years and it was an awful word. What it really meant was that you developed something and we never heard anything about it. We thought it was expensive and not a lot happened. In some instances, we all know lots happened because of them, but basically it was a negative feeling on the part of school board trustees. As a person out in a municipality, it seemed to come a lot from the province, so that is my attitude seeping through here, I cannot help it.

On your very first page, when you talk about how you went about putting this report together, you say that the the task force reviewed the literature and talked to people with expertise in year-round education. Were the people with the expertise in year-round education basically people here in Ontario who had worked elsewhere, or are they people who are involved in year-round education here in our own province?

Mr. Martin: Mr. Lennox may know of others, but I know one of the major people we spoke to was up in North York. There are a couple of schools. I am not certain of the names. Avon Glen comes to mind. The task force did, in fact, interview individuals who were involved in that particular school and received data from them. Most of the data did come from the studies in the San Diego area.

Mrs. Cunningham: In your recommendation 2 on page 9, where you are talking about the benefits of school year-round, I am sure we must have programs in Ontario now at almost every board, where we have year-round school for remedial and enrichment purposes. At least I am certainly aware of many of them. Most boards have camps or they have people trying to make up credits, and now there are people taking credits in advance.

Is there anything to be gained from looking at how those programs have worked? To me, it looks like we would have information on who the students are and how they feel about going to school year-round.

Mr. Martin: You are referring, I would assume, mainly to secondary students.

Mrs. Cunningham: I thought there were programs for grades 7 and 8, as well, for students to take remedial kinds of credits or have a second chance. There are certainly enrichment programs in London, I am very much aware, for elementary school students.

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Mr. Martin: I can speak for my own district, Etobicoke. There are remedial programs in the areas of math and English at the grades 7 and 8 level. They also have a computer camp and a music camp where they use the outdoor education facilities. People in these enriched areas will go for a week and have found it very beneficial; no question about it. They are doing something they want to do. It is like the enrichment area that was mentioned at the beginning. Going away to camp and playing an instrument they are good at is something these people will definitely enjoy. They have had it in French, music and those elective areas.

Mrs. Cunningham: In recommendation 2 you are really talking about the traditional school year with all subjects and all students, about that happening somewhere in the form of, let's say an interesting summer program one can look at. Is that what you mean: taking the traditional program and putting it into the summer?

Mr. Martin: I think we are looking at the total achievement of an individual child; in comparison to the 185 instructional days that currently exist, if that person was put into year-round education where it would be split up, reducing the amount of review between vacation periods, would this mean the overall achievement of that child at the end of the year would be greater or possibly less?

Mrs. Cunningham: I think the special-education people would have a lot to say about that. I was thinking of taking the traditional program just to see, first, who would buy into it. My guess is you would not get a lot buying into it in the elementary schools. But if you did, what does it look like? I would think, having paid attention to that work over the past, people in special education would already have a lot to say about what the gains are and what the losses are for any class of students that would go summer-round. It is just an observation.

You are a fifth-grade teacher, Mr. Martin?

Mr. Martin: Yes.

Mrs. Cunningham: You are aware of how students look forward to their summer holiday, and it is traditionally a fairly long one in Ontario. When you talk about developing the models, would you and your school think the junior grades or the senior students would opt more into going year-round, if you were to develop some kind of a program; or would it be the same?

Mr. Martin: The area in which I taught also has a lot to do with it. That was an inner-city area of Etobicoke. I can tell you they would probably appreciate shorter periods of time over the summer, because they have nothing to do. The parents cannot afford to send them to summer programs and, therefore, probably they would like to come back after a two- or three-week vacation and get back into the course of study.

If you go to the middle area of Etobicoke where all the people own cottages up in the Muskokas, sure, the kids cannot wait to get out of school the last day, because they are going to water-ski and have a great time over the summer vacation until September rolls around again. I

believe it has a lot to do with where the child is being raised and what the economic status is as far as the family is concerned.

Mrs. Cunningham: I agree with you on that, but parents are really keenly interested in their children's achievement, and if they thought for one minute going to school year-round was going to help them, they would all have them there, just like in kindergarten, which we know is optional. It is a perception; not that we can prove the children have made wonderful gains or we know that they have made head starts. Still, parents opt into it and I guess that would happen; although I very much appreciate the observations you have made and I agree with what you said.

Just on the one point of Mr. Johnston's, I can remember looking at all kinds of information around what happens in the world for breaks. I am just guessing, but I think the North American systems basically have only one more week of breaks than in Europe; it is just spread out differently. It seems to me that our breaks are one, one and eight, meaning Christmas, March break and the long summer; in Europe I think it is two, two and five. People have looked that up; it does not take long to find it out. I have not seen it, but I am just remembering from what people have told me in the past and I was very shocked to hear that. There was not very much difference–one or two weeks or something.

Is it not great to have researchers do all this stuff? We are blessed down here.

Mr. Chairman: We will keep looking for that information while we go on to Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: I found your chart particularly helpful. Just looking at it, I wonder if we are not talking about recognizing the significance of our education system and structural changes that may or may not occur. I wonder if the tail is not wagging the dog when you look at the broader impact. If you look at external alone, it seems to me you are talking about a potential retooling of society, more than just attitudinal changes that would be required. It affects every aspect of the community, whether it be the private sector or the public sector.

The last brief, the one before you, outlined a number of specific areas that would be impacted in relationship to this. I am thinking more along the lines of the business community's concern. Perhaps they are both mentally and physically sort of tooled toward the summer break and employment and that type of thing in planning their activities. It is clearly not a simple adjustment in only one sector. I thank you for the chart, but I just wonder if you have any expansionary comments on it and on the implications of a change of this nature on really all of society?

Mr. Martin: I think you have hit one of the critical areas. As a long-time citizen of the Windsor area, I can tell you that when you are down with the automotive grouping, when it has structured its new car year and it is retooling for the new car year, it is very much in conjunction with the school year. It does not mean they cannot change, but a lot of ingrained patterns would have to be broken, and they would have to be brought as a partner to see the benefits of it and to understand how that would assist business and industry as well.

On the point that you make with regard to education doing this in isolation, I think in any school jurisdiction you are going to have to take a family of schools to do it first, and even that is going to be anxiety-provoking to the rest of the surrounding community. I do not want to comment any more. It would be a wonderful two-hour debate on the influence that such a fundamental change would have.

Mr. Mahoney: Let me just go on with your comment about the family-of-schools idea, because I actually wrote that down in relation to your ninth recommendation. You are talking here about where an experimental school year is implemented, and I use your words, in selected schools. That would cause me some concern as opposed to, at the very least, a family of schools or perhaps a city. If you use the example of Peel, you might take the city of Mississauga and leave Brampton and Caledon at the status quo, or the city of Brampton, etc.

It would seem to me there are a lot of families around where children are in different schools. I would have a lot of concern about doing that on a selected, individual school basis, or even a couple of schools. I think if anything were done, bearing in mind the implications on all of society, it would have to be a broader base rather than a smaller base.

Mr. Martin: I agree with you that the family-of-schools concept would obviously be the best way to go if you were going to implement it in a system. If I take King's Masting and Erin Mills Senior in the groups around that area, obviously that would be the beneficial way for Peel, for example, to see whether or not it was going to work. I would agree with that.

Mr. Mahoney: Another comment that I think you made at the beginning of your brief is a point I made this morning. I forget exactly where it is, but I read it. It was that the structure was

established based on the agricultural economy. I hear that from a lot of people, but as I said this morning, having grown up in the city, there were a lot of different reasons than just agriculture. Kids need time to work to earn money. They need some continuity and I guess some comfort that a certain time period is going to be available.

1540

There was the reference to the impact on the job market in relationship to recreation and parks and all the various avenues that young people use for employment. It seems to me that reducing that sort of peak period for that job creation would have a fairly negative effect on available jobs for kids and on their ability to plan that.

Mr. Martin: Let me just answer briefly. I think you can look at it the other way as well. A lot of the lodges, for example, in the northern parts of Ontario now are open year round, do a year-round business. We have a lot of our conferences up there during the course of the year.

I could see that being an advantage, because, therefore, if you are on a year-round educational system, although some students would definitely be back in the classroom, there would be other job opportunities for those students who were out during the course of the winter months; and perhaps those resort people would welcome that change.

Mr. Mahoney: You made one reference that any change would require a majority vote of the teaching community involved in the specific area and I believe you used the reference "on an annual basis." Would you suggest that there be literally an annual ballot cast as to whether or not the majority of teachers wish to carry on with that type of thing?

It would concern me that that is a little bit of government by plebiscite, as opposed to developing a plan through consultation. I have no problem with the majority of people agreeing with the plan initially, but reviewing it annually would seem to create a lot of chaos.

Mr. Martin: This is what we have done in the past, because in some cases it is a one-shot deal. For example, once the North Shore had put it into place, they evaluated it and then had a vote the next year. I am sure that if it was a continuous rollover from year to year, eventually, unless it was questioned by a majority of the people in the community, there would not be an annual vote.

The policy actually states that it is approved annually by the majority of the teachers. We are not referring there to the community at large.

Mr. Mahoney: Just the teachers in the area that is involved.

Mr. Martin: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: Okay. Thanks for the brief. I would just reiterate the comment that I think that chart is something this committee should look at or should very carefully consider before we write our report, because it is all-encompassing as to the impacts on all aspects of the community.

Madam Chairman: Yes, whoever did it is to be commended. I found it excellent myself.

Mr. Martin: I will bring that word back to the task force members. They will be happy to hear that.

Madam Chairman: Good. A final question from Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. Villeneuve: I will not be long. Thank you for your presentation. In recommendation 3, you make the suggestion that school boards participate in pilot projects on a year-round school year and be fully funded for such projects. I understand quite a number of schools within school boards are going basically on a year-round basis, either on remedial or for high achievers. I think it is almost in place now. Do we have any school boards that are chafing at the bit to have this happen?

Mr. Lennox: Yes, I think you have school boards that would look most positively upon exploring this. As I commented, two of the individuals whom we interviewed with the task force were educational leaders in schools in North York, which does have flexible programs going at the present time, so I would see it in that setting, in a board such as that or as in the Peel board, where we have had interest shown.

We have also had interest shown from three or four northern boards, not just from North Shore but from boards up in Moosonee that have adopted experimental school years. These experimental school years are on file with the Ministry of Education, because each one has had to be approved by the Ministry of Education. They are certainly available to you.

I believe you would find that a smaller school board would find it much easier to come to grips with a flexible school year than the large school boards, because the geographic location would be easily handled in terms of communication and interaction at that stage. I believe there are several boards in the province that would look forward to exploring this venture.

Mr. Villeneuve: That is an interesting prospect. Second, would we have enough teachers? We already have a shortage of teachers. We

would theoretically, as you say, have 25 per cent more student participation. Where would we get the teachers?

Mr. Lennox: The teacher shortage is a reality in Ontario. In several pilot projects, exploratory examples of this, the number of teachers you would require to facilitate this would be such that it could be handled within the number of teachers available or who could be hired in Ontario at present. It would not accentuate the need for training additional teachers or going outside to hire new teachers. To examine this, would take only 200 or 300 teachers. I do not think it would have an additional impact on the shortage that we have.

Mr. Villeneuve: Would these be some of the teachers who took early retirement?

Mr. Lennox: They still have a lot to offer in education. If we could get the superannuation changed so they could teach longer, so they could teach one section of that school year, yes, that is quite a possibility. A person with 35 years of background in education and talent is certainly an asset to our system.

Mr. Villeneuve: Our resources in the teaching area have certainly gone to the limit and beyond, and we have to be innovative. Would you also be suggesting that we could upgrade some of the teachers who are in the system now without a certificate? Would you say that something should be done in that area?

Mr. Lennox: I do not understand your words, "upgrade a teacher without a certificate."

Mr. Villeneuve: I am talking about those with permission to teach without having the actual teaching certificate.

Mr. Lennox: I believe the dynamic government in Ontario right now will provide enough teacher candidates to the faculties of education that this would not have to be done.

Mr. Villeneuve: On that comment, what can I say?

Madam Chairman: On that positive note, let me thank you very much for your presentation today. Are there any final comments?

Mr. Lennox: Yes, I do need one final comment.

Madam Chairman: Is it as good as the last one?

Mr. Lennox: It is better, because I did bring with us 25 copies of our response to the first offerings of the select committee on education. I would like to leave those with you; I do not wish to dwell on them. I must say that our federation enjoyed reading your response and must commend you for the effort you put into the first sitting of the select committee. It certainly challenged us to prepare our brief to you. We have kept our comments to the first report succinct and I hope they will be useful in your deliberations and the deliberations of the Ministry of Education.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Now you are in for a real treat, because I get to practise my French.

Nous accueillons aujourd'hui un groupe qui va faire une présentation en français–let me try to get your name right–l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens. I do not think I did that very well. Bienvenue.

ASSOCIATION DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS FRANCO-ONTARIENS

M. Sincennes : Bonjour. Je m'appelle Yves Sincennes. Je suis actuellement vice-président de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens. Je suis accompagné aujourd'hui de Marc Cazabon, secrétaire général adjoint à l'Association.

Merci de la chance que vous nous donnez de faire un peu de remarques au sujet de la réorganisation de la journée scolaire et de l'année scolaire. Je tiens d'abord à vous rappeler que l'Association regroupe quelque six mille enseignants, donc à peu près 5 pour cent de la population des enseignantes et des enseignants de la province.

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Je dois vous dire qu'il faut faire attention, parce qu'on ne peut pas traiter tout le monde sur le même pied, puisque nos effectifs sont moindres et que les effectifs au niveau des élèves sont moindres aussi. Quand on parle d'une année scolaire au complet, je pense qu'il faut faire attention, parce que nous avons déjà de la difficulté à offrir toute la variété d'options, et ce n'est pas notre préférence, pour le moment, d'aller pendant douze mois.

Nous nous sommes déjà rencontrés, Madame, au mois de juillet, si vous vous rappelez. Quand je suis venu, j'ai demandé d'être excusé parce que je travaillais à ce moment-là comme enseignant dans les programmes d'été de mon conseil. Nous avons discuté la philosophie, les buts. En septembre, un autre groupe est venu vous rencontrer pour parler de l'organisation du système d'éducation en Ontario.

L'AEFO est d'avis qu'il n'y a pas lieu, vraiment, de transformer toute l'année scolaire. Cependant, si vous pensez que vous devez

permettre certaines modifications, nous souhaiterions voir une consultation prescrite dans vos règlements, de façon à ce que les parents et les enseignants soient consultés, et que ce ne soit pas quelque chose qui nous est tout simplement imposé, à la population francophone.

L'année scolaire comme elle est là, je l'ai déjà dit, nous est satisfaisante. Cependant, je voudrais parler des journées d'activités professionnelles, parce qu'en plus des 185 jours d'enseignement, nous croyons qu'il devrait y avoir un maximum de neuf jours d'activités professionnelles. De ces neuf journées, nous espérons que deux ou trois seraient remises aux enseignantes et aux enseignants pour préparer leur perfectionnement professionnel.

Il faudrait peut-être même penser – d'ailleurs, Marc Godbout, dans son rapport, le mentionne – à deux ou trois journées provinciales ; parce qu'il est très difficile, et de plus en plus difficile, de sortir de nos écoles nos enseignantes et nos enseignants qui ont un intérêt pédagogique particulier. Quand on veut faire un congrès au niveau des bibliothécaires, au niveau de l'enfance en difficulté, au niveau de l'utilisation des ordinateurs, il devient difficile, à un moment donné, de sortir ces gens-là des écoles, puisqu'il y a pénurie d'enseignantes et d'enseignants et qu'on a personne pour les remplacer. Donc, souvent les enseignants ne peuvent pas participer à ces rencontres.

On sait qu'au Nouveau-Brunswick, ces deux journées provinciales existent déjà et permettent aux associations provinciales à intérêt pédagogique de se réunir.

Le service de garderie : simplement, un commentaire en passant. Je pense que la population, les villes en général, prennent de plus en plus leurs responsabilités. Nous pensons que les écoles peuvent sûrement servir, à ce moment-là, mais ce n'est pas la responsabilité des enseignantes et des enseignants.

L'AEFO est d'avis que toute modification doit faire l'objet de négociations avec les sections affiliées d'enseignantes et d'enseignants et aussi en consultation avec les parents.

J'arrive de mes vacances – le congé de mars – où je suis parti d'Ottawa pour aller à Sudbury, et nos enfants ne pouvaient pas rencontrer les enfants là-bas, puisque le congé ne coincidait pas. Je pense qu'il faut faire attention quand on fait une année scolaire où les gens peuvent aller un peu à leur guise. Il faut respecter le choix des gens, mais, par contre, il faut respecter aussi le fait qu'à un moment donné, quand on a un arrêt au niveau de l'année scolaire, ça permet aux familles de se visiter. Cette année, au mois de mars en tout cas, c'était clair que même dans certaines villes, les enfants d'un système ne pouvaient pas visiter les enfants de l'autre système.

Le congé de Noël, et le congé de mars, nous croyons qu'ils devraient être uniformes. On devrait tendre vers ça. Quand je parle du congé de Noël, je voudrais attirer votre attention sur le fait qu'au niveau de la francophonie, ce qu'on appelle le congé de Noël a été longtemps, pour les francophones, le congé du jour de l'An. Donc, une année scolaire qui doit reprendre le 2 janvier, c'est très difficile, parce que, dans les familles françaises, le jour de l'An est plus fêté que le jour de Noël. Si on ne fait pas attention, on est en train de s'attaquer en fait à la culture francophone – inconsciemment, je vous le fais remarquer.

L'Association est aussi consciente que certaines pressions existent pour considérer l'utilisation des locaux scolaires pendant une période de douze mois. Cependant, je tiens à vous faire remarquer que pendant la période estivale, c'est souvent le temps que les conseils scolaires prennent pour réparer les écoles. Je l'ai vu à Ottawa à plusieurs reprises : quand on organise nos cours d'été – parce qu'on a quand même des programmes continus, en éducation permanente, de la maternelle à la treizième année – dans mon conseil, on me dit, telle école n'est pas disponible parce que, dans celle-là, on refait le toit, et, dans celle-là, on refait le sous-sol. Donc, il faut qu'à un moment donné, il y ait un arrêt. Je pense que, par tradition, on choisit les mois d'été pour faire les réparations.

Certains prétendent aussi que les deux mois du congé d'été ne favorisent pas la rétention des apprentissages. Je tiens à demander à Marc de faire une remarque, puisqu'une étude qui a été faite aux Etats-Unis prouve que ce n'est pas nécessairement vrai qu'en allongeant l'année, on va améliorer la rétention chez les élèves. Marc, on avait un commentaire à ce sujet.

M. Cazabon : Ce n'est pas un commentaire. Je suis certain que le comité est au courant des études, étant donné les facilités de recherche qui existent. C'est juste que ce matin, lorsqu'on m'a avisé que je devais remplacer le secrétaire général devant votre comité, j'ai lu le document et j'ai demandé si on avait des ouvrages de référence pour ces sujets-là.

L'indication, c'est qu'il y a déjà eu une analyse qui est parue dans le « Journal of Experimental Education », qui est intitulée : « The Extended School Year: Implications for Student Achievement ». Et les résultats confir-

ment le message qui est indiqué dans le mémoire de l'AEFO.

M. Sincennes : Merci, Marc. Je voudrais aussi mentionner que l'AEFO est consciente qu'il y aurait peut-être certains avantages financiers à se servir des écoles douze mois par année pour les cours réguliers. Cependant, il faut mettre le comité en garde : j'espère que si on apporte des changements à l'année scolaire, ce ne sera pas pour des raisons financières, mais pour des raisons pédagogiques, s'il y en a, qui sont plus importantes que les autres.

L'Association croit qu'on peut tenter des expériences et procéder à des recherches, mais toujours en augmentant la consultation. Nous sommes d'avis que les programmes offerts durant l'été devraient être maintenus. J'ai entendu dire dernièrement qu'on songeait à arrêter certains programmes d'été au niveau élémentaire. Je voudrais vous mettre en garde, espérant que vous allez mentionner au gouvernement que pour les francophones, les cours d'été ont été, pendant plusieurs années, des cours d'enrichissement ; que si on n'avait pas les cours d'été dans nos écoles de langue française, les enfants s'inscriraient à des cours, offerts par les villes ou par d'autres groupes, souvent bilingues, sinon anglophones ; et que c'est une façon de s'angliciser davantage.

Je pense que les cours de langue française ont servi depuis longtemps dans nos écoles, et nous espérons pouvoir continuer à servir la clientèle. A Ottawa, nous avions jusqu'à mille élèves inscrits depuis quatre ou cinq ans.

Au niveau du passage du secondaire à l'université, je voudrais vous mentionner que de plus en plus d'écoles secondaires se servent du système des semestres. Cependant, il n'y a que l'université Laurentienne qui offre la possibilité d'entrer à l'université au mois de janvier ou de février. Il faudrait qu'à un moment donné, il y ait plus de flexibilité dans les universités, afin de permettre à nos élèves, qui terminent fin janvier, de pouvoir entrer à l'université à ce moment-là.

La journée scolaire, selon le Règlement 262, ne devrait pas, à notre avis, être modifiée. Nous croyons que nous devons maintenir un maximum d'heures d'enseignement pour les élèves et le personnel. Cependant, nous croyons que nous pourrions être invités à négocier la journée des enseignantes et des enseignants, mais on ne devrait pas toucher aux heures d'enseignement pour les élèves et les professeurs.

Plusieurs conseils scolaires offrent, dans les écoles secondaires, des cours du soir crédités. Ces cours devraient être financés de la même façon que les programmes réguliers. On devrait maintenir la même qualité d'enseignement. C'est sûr qu'avec le système actuel, ça ne permet pas qu'il y ait des conseillers pédagogiques, qu'il y ait un personnel pour superviser ces cours, et nous croyons qu'on devrait arriver à donner un financement égal à ce qui est offert durant l'année pour chacun des crédits.

Nous sommes aussi d'avis que l'enseignement des langues d'origine devrait se faire à l'extérieur des heures régulières, de façon à ne pas nuire au programme d'enseignement, qui est déjà le programme régulier actuel.

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Enfin, l'Association est satisfaite des disposition actuelles des règlements concernant l'année scolaire et la journée scolaire. Elle accepte cependant que l'on permette, dans certains milieux, de faire des expériences. Il faudrait peut-être faire attention au niveau du financement. Vous êtes bien conscients qu'à un moment donné, on prend le portrait du nombre d'élèves au 30 septembre, et c'est comme ça qu'on finance nos conseils scolaires. Si on se met à changer l'année scolaire, il faudra aussi changer cette façon d'octroyer les argents pour le fonctionnement des conseils scolaires. Nous vous remercions de nous avoir donné la chance de participer. Nous sommes prêts à répondre à vos questions dans la mesure du possible. Merci, Madame.

Mme la Présidente : Merci de votre présentation.

M. Beer : Madame la Présidente, je pense qu'il faut peut-être dire, au commencement cet après-midi, que cette année, c'est le cinquantième anniversaire de l'AEFO. Je pense que c'est peut-être la première fois qu'on a l'occasion de lui souhaiter bon anniversaire. Il y a dix jours, il y avait un banquet, une conférence à Ottawa, et je pense qu'on a bien fêté l'AEFO.

M. Sincennes : D'ailleurs, si vous me le permettez, M. Beer, cette année, nous fêtons en fait le cinquantième anniversaire le 12 mai, puisqu'on a commencé nos activités le 12 mai 1939. Cette année, dans la province, pour la plupart des conseils scolaires, les enseignantes et les enseignants seront en journée pédagogique et termineront le soir par des fêtes au niveau de toute la province.

M. Beer : C'est peut-être la première journée d'études provinciales?

M. Sincennes : Peut-être.

M. Beer : On est un projet-pilote, quoi?

M. Sincennes : Nous avons tenté de le faire ; on a presque réussi.

M. Beer : Alors, sur cette question de l'année scolaire, en effet, pour la communauté francophone, pour les écoles de langue française, j'imagine qu'il y a un problème qui existe pour vous, qui n'est pas le même pour la communauté anglophone, c'est-à-dire qu'au point de vue des effectifs, des ressources dans n'importe quel domaine, on est toujours en train de construire un système francophone.

Même avec l'année scolaire que nous avons maintenant, il y a des problèmes : il n'y a pas assez de professeurs dans plusieurs domaines. Il n'y a peut-être pas assez d'écoles ou de programmes offerts. Pensez-vous que l'AEFO serait peut-être un peu plus disposée à examiner cette solution de rechange si on était déjà au même niveau que les écoles de langue anglaise? Donc, le point de vue de l'AEFO, aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas nécessairement une question pédagogique, mais simplement qu'on dit : « Ecoute, nous sommes en train de construire notre propre système. Ce n'est pas encore construit. Alors, nous devons faire ça avant de planifier une autre sorte de système. »

M. Sincennes : Oui. Si vous me le permettez, madame la Présidente, je pense que ce qui est important de réaliser, c'est que pour les francophones, on ne veut pas de statut particulier, mais on voudrait sensibiliser le comité au fait qu'on est différent. On est peu nombreux.

Justement, ma fille me disait la semaine dernière : « J'aimerais prendre cet été un cours d'art dramatique. » Mais le cours, il ne s'offrira pas : il n'y a pas assez de jeunes. Donc, il faut vraiment organiser notre système pour que le cours d'art dramatique se donne à un temps – A l'été, on va offrir un cours qui va attirer plus de gens, mais on ne peut pas offrir tous les cours tout le temps, puisque la population n'est pas assez nombreuse.

Les francophones ont presque besoin d'un calendrier scolaire qui serait à eux. C'est la raison pour laquelle, depuis quand même un bon moment, on demande une espèce de gestion parallèle, pour justement répondre aux besoins d'une façon propre aux francophones ; et non pas pour être à côté, mais parce qu'on connaît les problèmes de la francophonie. Je pense que de plus en plus, le gouvernement en a tenu compte. Donc, je pense qu'on est sur la bonne voie, mais il faut en tenir compte vraiment dans la réorganisation de l'année scolaire.

M. Beer : Deuxième question : nous avons parlé aussi du changement du rôle de l'école depuis plusieurs années, surtout chez la communauté francophone. Je pense que le rôle de l'école comme centre communautaire est extrêment important ; encore une fois, peut-être plus important parce que, des fois, dans les villes, c'est peut-être un même centre qui est l'école, le centre culturel, le centre communautaire, etc.

Dans cette optique, on voit qu'il y a peut-être, à l'intérieur du système francophone, une plus grande participation des parents, des enseignantes et des enseignants dans le travail de l'école, dans la vie de l'école, où il ne s'agit pas de la période d'instruction, mais plutôt du soir, après trois ou quatre heures de l'après-midi. Est-ce qu'il est vrai que l'école est, en effet, plutôt un centre communautaire, ou qu'on essaie au moins de faire de l'école francophone le centre ou un des centres communautaires de la ville ou de la communauté?

M. Sincennes : Je pense que vous avez raison, M. Beer, quand vous dites ça, parce que, autrefois, les gens se rassemblaient autour de l'église, puisque les francophones n'avaient peut-être pas d'autre choix que d'être catholiques pour avoir de l'éducation en français. Aujourd'hui, comme nous avons un choix, les gens se rassemblent autour de l'école, qu'elle soit catholique ou publique. C'est le centre culturel, le coeur de notre communauté.

D'ailleurs, sur l'école franco-ontarienne de demain, c'est clair, dans le rapport de Marc Godbout, que l'école devient le coeur de la communauté, et c'est là qu'on va servir les gens. On ne fera pas abstraction de la religion catholique, puisqu'une grosse partie de nos gens sont là, mais c'est l'école qui devient le centre, le coeur de la communauté française. C'est là que les gens se rassemblent pour travailler. D'ailleurs, à Ottawa, on est chanceux : on a un conseil de langue française ; on espère vraiment qu'à travailler ensemble, on va avoir un système d'éducation qui va vraiment favoriser la francophonie.

M. Beer : Merci.

Mme la Présidente : Merci.

M. R. F. Johnston : Merci, madame la Présidente, et merci, M. Sincennes, pour le commentaire et le mémoire.

Je n'ai pas bien compris tous les problèmes d'une prolongation de l'année scolaire, quand vous parliez du problème actuel de présenter toutes les options pour les enfants. Ce n'est pas le cas pour le système des semestres, le système prolongé pour toute l'année. C'est une autre méthode de donner plus d'options dans les circonstances. C'est moins de rigidité que

l'année qu'on a maintenant. Cela pourrait peut-être vous aider un peu, non?

M. Sincennes : Non, mais le système des semestres, c'est deux temps durant l'année scolaire ; tandis que l'année scolaire ouverte douze mois par année nous amènerait peut-être à trois trimestres, ou même à quatre sections, et c'est là qu'on ne voudrait pas se diviser davantage.

Qu'on ait deux semestres, ça va ; qu'il y ait des cours durant l'été, qui soient offerts en français dans ces écoles-là pour ceux et celles qui en veulent, ça va aussi ; mais on ne voudrait pas qu'il y ait trois groupes, parce que là, à ce moment-là, les deux groupes principaux, vous allez les diviser en trois, ou en quatre, si vous le faites pendant douze mois. On veut que les écoles soient ouvertes, mais on ne voudrait pas qu'elles soient ouvertes pour le programme régulier durant toute l'année.

M. R. F. Johnston : Juste une question. C'est une question que j'ai posée à tous les groupes aujourd'hui. Elle concerne le raisonnement pédagogique de notre système actuel. Je ne suis pas certain que je comprenne pourquoi on tient si férocement à notre système de 188 jours, avec de longues vacances d'été. Pourquoi est-ce le cas, à votre avis?

M. Sincennes : Je pense que, dans le mémoire, on mentionne justement que le congé estival, c'est quelque chose d'acquis en Amérique du Nord et au Canada – que les gens prennent leurs vacances à ce moment-là. On ne veut pas nécessairement changer ça. Les parents ne nous ont pas demandé de changer ce système-là.

C'est sûr que l'été, il y a des gens qui ne vont pas en vacances, parce que, quand même, il y a encore des gens, dans notre province, qui sont défavorisés ; donc, qui s'en vont dans les écoles, dans les systèmes, dans les camps de vacances, qui coûtent peu cher.

Ensuite, le système : qu'on ait 185 jours, c'est par tradition. Je pense que ce qu'on préconise le plus, c'est l'éducation permanente. C'est un peu ce qui se passe dans nos écoles. Vous avez des écoles qui sont ouvertes presque douze mois par année. L'an passé, dans notre système, chez nous à Ottawa, jusqu'à la mi-août, il y avait des élèves ; donc, il y a eu seulement deux semaines où il n'y avait pas d'élèves dans nos écoles. Les 185 jours, c'est comme un acquis, qu'il soit placé dans un bloc ou en morceaux. Je pense qu'il n'y a pas vraiment de place – et d'ailleurs, M. Lennox l'a mentionné tantôt : « Coupez-la comme vous voulez, vous allez finir par avoir de 185 à 195 jours de classe. » Pour moi, ce n'est quand même pas–

M. Cazabon : Si vous réussissez, dans votre recherche, à trouver un raisonnement pédagogique, pourriez-vous nous le faire parvenir?

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M. R. F. Johnston : Certainement.

La question finale, qui concerne le système des semestres maintenant – dans un sens pédagogique, à mon avis, il y a de grands problèmes. Ce qui me frappe immédiatement, c'est la question de terminer le semestre d'automne dans le mois de janvier. Après les vacances de Noël, on a les examens, et puis on entre dans le prochain semestre, sans avoir la possibilité de passer à une université quelconque de la province.

C'est bizarre. Cela me semble plus rationnel d'avoir la fin avant Noël, avec les examens avant Noël ; et, par contre, de commencer le semestre dans le mois d'août, pas dans le mois de septembre comme maintenant. Parlez-moi de ça.

M. Sincennes : C'est sûr que la majorité de nos étudiants et étudiantes finissent en juin. Nous avons soulevé dans le mémoire le point qu'il faudrait que les universités soient plus flexibles. Et nous espérons, parce que vous étudiez quand même le système, que vous ferez des recommandations à ce niveau-là. Mais c'est sûr qu'il y a des problèmes.

A notre connaissance, il y a seulement l'université Laurentienne qui accepte les étudiants au mois de février. Par contre, je voudrais aussi mentionner que le système des semestres existe même à l'élémentaire. Dans certains systèmes, les enfants, cinq mois par année, prennent une option, que ce soit les arts industriels ou la musique, et, pendant l'autre cinq mois, le contraire. Je pense qu'on connaît ça un peu–

M. R. F. Johnston : Et la question des examens en janvier, après les vacances de Noël?

M. Sincennes : Oui. C'est comme ça. Il n'y a pas de problèmes majeurs pour le moment. Il reste que l'entrée à l'université, c'est important.

M. R. F. Johnston : Merci.

M. Villeneuve : Merci, madame la Présidente. Je vous remercie de votre mémoire, messieurs. Maintenant, est-ce que, d'après vous, pour la communauté franco-ontarienne, est-ce que c'est un problème un peu plus aigu, le fait que nous ayons plusieurs écoles qui ont le système des semestres ?

M. Sincennes : Il y a une étude qui a été faite dans le passé à ce niveau-là, pour justement aider

les gens qui sont dans les écoles secondaires à établir un système de semestres. Mais il reste que la majorité de nos gens sont à Ottawa et à Sudbury. A l'université Laurentienne, on a déjà la porte ouverte à l'université. Donc, il y a quand même des possibilités, mais je ne pense pas qu'il est plus aigu chez nous qu'ailleurs.

M. Villeneuve : Deuxièmement, vous recommandez et vous êtes de l'avis que l'enseignement des langues d'origine devrait se faire à l'extérieur des heures régulières de la journée scolaire. Pouvez-vous élaborer là-dessus, un petit peu, votre raisonnement de ça?

M. Sincennes : C'est qu'on a déjà un programme régulier à couvrir en cinq heures. Si on en consacre une partie aux langues d'origine, on va enlever aux jeunes du temps pour le reste des matières.

C'est un peu la même chose avec la religion dans les écoles catholiques. C'est peut-être pour ça que certains de nos jeunes – les parents ont choisi d'envoyer leurs enfants ailleurs, justement pour avoir plus de chances au niveau des options. Ils s'occupent eux-mêmes de la religion de leurs enfants, au lieu de la faire enseigner à l'école. Et on pense que c'est un peu la même chose avec l'enseignement des langues d'origine. On pense que ça devrait être donné en dehors, de façon à ne pas enlever de l'histoire, de la géographie ou de la musique aux jeunes.

M. Villeneuve : Et, d'après vous, ça devrait être enseigné quand, les langues d'origine?

M. Sincennes : Après les heures–

M. Villeneuve : N'importe quand, sauf les heures scolaires?

M. Sincennes : Cela pourrait être le jour, mais ça veut dire qu'on prolongerait la journée scolaire. Je pense, à l'école secondaire De La Salle, qu'un jeune prend un cours de musique qui est facultatif au milieu de la journée, et continue sa journée jusqu'à 4 h 30, non pas 3 h 30. Donc, il y a de la place pour le faire dans le jour, mais il ne faut pas toucher aux 300 minutes d'enseignement régulier.

M. Villeneuve : Merci.

M. Furlong : Je voudrais seulement demander des éclaircissements.

C'est la deuxième fois qu'on a aujourd'hui l'histoire des 185 jours. Si tu fais des calculs, puis tu compares avec tous les autres, ça arrive à la même chose. J'ai fait des calculs, parce que ça a été mentionné, de temps en temps devant vous autres, que s'il y a 40 jours de travail – moi, je trouve que, pour quelqu'un qui prend trois semaines de vacances, quelqu'un qui n'est pas un enseignant ou une enseignante –

Si tu calcules qu'il y a 52 semaines par année, puis il y a cinq jours par semaine de travail, ça arrive à 260 jours de travail. Si tu prends onze jours fériés, ça vous donne 249 jours. Puis, si tu prends, disons, 15 jours de vacances comme tous les autres – pas tous les autres, il y en a qui ont seulement deux semaines, comme M. Johnston nous le disait – cela donne 234 jours de travail qui restent dans l'année. Si on prend les 185 jours, plus les 9 jours pour les journées d'activités professionnelles, ça nous laisse avec 40 jours. Quarante jours, ce n'est pas exactement – c'est plus qu'une couple de jours. On a là huit semaines de travail. Je ne veux pas que vous partiez d'ici, que le comité parte d'ici sans obtenir une clarification. Si j'ai manqué quelque chose, j'aimerais que vous m'expliquiez ça.

M. Sincennes : Je pense qu'il faut quand même regarder tout l'aspect du perfectionnement professionnel. J'ai presque envie d'être un peu espiègle, et de vous dire que si vous voulez comparer les années, il faudrait peut-être comparer le temps où les gens sont au travail. Si on fait ça avec les gens du gouvernement, avec les élus de notre gouvernement, avec nous autres, il ne faut peut-être pas compter les jours; il faut regarder le travail qui est fait. Et on pense que 185 jours de classe, ça répond au besoin.

M. Furlong : Ce n'est pas ça que vous avez fait. Vous avez dit que, quand on fait la comparaison, c'est la même chose ; on est bien proche, là, de 185 jours. Moi, je dis que quand moi, j'ai fait le calcul, j'ai trouvé qu'il manquait 40 jours. Je crois que ça fait une grande différence.

M. Sincennes : Il faut regarder, M. Furlong, après 25 années d'expérience, il n'y a pas beaucoup de gens qui ont juste 15 jours de vacances.

M. Furlong : C'est vrai.

M. Sincennes : Peut-être 30 ou 35 jours de vacances.

M. Furlong : Je voulais seulement une clarification. Je voulais savoir si je manquais quelque chose. Puis, je crois que je ne manque rien.

Mme la Présidente : Encore une fois, merci de votre présentation aujourd'hui, et bon anniversaire.

M. Sincennes : Merci, madame. Marc?

M. Cazabon : J'ai juste un dernier commentaire, si vous me le permettez, madame. Vous

allez noter que dans notre présentation, nous avons parlé de l'importance de la consultation.

Je pense que dans quelque rapport que ce soit qui provienne de votre comité sur l'année scolaire, pour le secteur de langue française, cette consultation est primordiale – non seulement à l'intérieur du système francophone, puis de la communauté francophone, mais à l'intérieur des systèmes éducatifs des différentes régions et à l'intérieur des mêmes municipalités, pour éviter qu'il y ait un « effet domino » sur des modifications à l'année scolaire et qu'on soit entraîné dans des modifications qui ne serviraient pas nécessairement la communauté francophone.

Alors, je pense que l'importance qu'on accorde à cette consultation, on aimerait qu'elle soit reflétée dans n'importe quelle recommandation qui viendrait de votre comité.

Mme la Présidente : Merci.

M. Sincennes : Merci beaucoup, madame. Merci à vous tous.

ONTARIO METIS AND ABORIGINAL ASSOCIATION

Madam Chairman: Our final presentation today will be by the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association. Welcome back to our committee. I think it is the third time, if I am not mistaken, that you have appeared before us. We look forward to hearing your words of wisdom today.

Mr. Recollet: As required, I mailed a copy of our brief to your staff. It was quite a lengthy copy. Today, I had a chance to talk to her before this meeting and I asked her to hand out a shortened version of our presentation. We had mailed 25 copies to you people. Hopefully, you had a chance to read them and there will be more time for questions.

Appearing with me today on behalf of the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association are Olaf Bjornaa, second vice-president, sitting to my right, and also Jim Baker, who is sitting next to Mr. Bjornaa on the right-hand side. These are the individuals who are appearing on behalf of the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association in reference to the organization and length of the school year.

Before discussing the following position paper on the organization and length of the school year, I wish to stress, by repeating them, some points made in OMAA's previous presentations to this committee. This committee must be aware that aboriginal rights are not to be equated with multicultural rights. As indigenous nations, we have the inherent right of self-government. That right comes to us from the Creator and we have a responsibility to exercise it. Our right of self-government includes the right to determine how our children will be educated. In other words, we have a right to establish our own school systems and to determine how those school systems will be run.

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Nothing in the following paper should be construed as undermining in any way our primary insistence on recognition of our right to self-government, including our right to self-government with respect to education. The recommendations contained in this paper are essentially recommendations that are meant for relatively quick and easy implementation in tandem with the establishment of aboriginal-controlled school systems.

We do not make recommendations with respect to the form or structure of aboriginal school systems, since those were determined by the aboriginal peoples themselves. All that is needed from this committee and from the Legislature in this regard is a clear statement recognizing the inherent jurisdiction of aboriginal peoples over the education of their children. We can then work together with nonaboriginal governments on the implementation of our right to self-government with respect to education.

The comments and recommendations contained in the following paper must therefore be seen not as steps towards recognition of our right to self-government, but rather merely as minimum reforms to the existing system.

The problem we wish to address is the high dropout rate among Metis and off-reserve native students and the resulting unemployment and dependency that tend to become a lifestyle characteristic of this group. Although the only long-term solution is the establishment of culturally appropriate schools and school curriculum for Metis and off-reserve native students, there are a number of ways the problem could be remedied in the short term by implementing alternative ways of organizing the length of the school year and the school day and the achievement of credits, as these are all interrelated.

Metis and Indian students drop out of school for many of the same reasons as many others from socioeconomic and minority cultural backgrounds. Metis and off-reserve native students find that the cultural assumptions of the school curriculum are foreign to them and that the time demands of the school run counter to many of their traditional and culturally determined activities.

The educational assumptions of the school aimed at preparing students for future careers with the Anglo-European culture emphasize information transfer through instruction, abstract reasoning, competitiveness and individual performance. Native culture is much more holistic, immediate, active and group-oriented and is aimed at cultural maintenance and adaptability. The most fundamental difference between native culture and the Anglo-European culture of those schools lies in the way native children traditionally learn their information and skills that are needed to survive well within their culture.

While school perceives the most efficient method of learning as information transfer through instruction by a trained teacher in a classroom or large groups, the native way is by mentorship on an individual basis within the ongoing life of the community by any adult who has proficiency in the skill that is to be learned. Instruction is by role-modelling in concrete situations. Explanation is through stories about parallel situations from which the learner can draw inferences. Learning is always relevant to the needs of the learner, because a child learns a skill or information when it is necessary to know it.

Time is not necessarily a factor. In acquiring knowledge, competition is not stressed. Education takes place in an informal setting and must proceed to be a relationship between the learner and the mentor or elder. Learning always relates to the seasonal rhythm and takes place in an environment appropriate to what is being learned, rather than being confined to a classroom, a textbook and a nine-to-four day broken into subject periods. A program-planning procedure that assumed school could be in different locations and over a 12-month period would facilitate this kind of experimental approach to learning.

With regard to lifestyle factors affecting the education of off-reserve native students, for generations off-reserve natives have lived on the fringe of the dominant society. As a result, many natives have existed and continue to exist under poor economic conditions with the attending difficulties that accompany low income, high unemployment rates, etc. Situations develop that become part of the dropout pattern.

Absenteeism: Many off-reserve natives are seasonal workers who may be required to move their families several times during the year. Isolation or lack of community services may require that a student stay at home to undertake tasks necessary for the immediate survival of the family. I would like to make a quick reference to a quote in our more detailed presentation. It is a quote by Sealey and Kirkness, 1973:

"Let us state clearly that not all Indian and Metis students are poor school attenders. School attendance has improved greatly over the last few years. However, there are poor attenders....If this happened, I knew he was away because of illness or for economic reasons. Early fall and late spring are popular times for absence not only because of the good weather, but because sometimes the whole family goes potato picking, wild rice picking or sugar-beeting (also guiding, hunting and trapping). For these reasons, children may be absent three or four weeks at a time. It is difficult for a teacher to discourage such excursions as these seasonal jobs are a means of livelihood and the whole family is employed."

Inadequate language skills: Because English is a second language in many Metis and off-reserve native homes, children often lack the language and reading skills to enable them to comprehend books and oral instruction in English. Poor reading skills lead to frequent failure in the primary grades.

Low self-esteem: Racism, semi-poverty, prejudice and frequent failures in a school create a low self-image in the native child.

A tradition of change in the public school system: The public school system has always been responsive to the requirements of the community and has created a curriculum that has reflected the perceived needs of the society and a school year that fits the activities of the community. A 10-month school year was appropriate to an agricultural society and was adaptable to the later industrial and service society when needs for casual labour increased around Christmastime and during the summer. School curriculum has been adjusted to reflect industry's need for specialized technical skills, punctuality and conformist behaviour.

The needs of the post-industrial community and multicultural nature of today's society have created pressures from the community. Once again, to modify the educational system there is a need to shift education from training people to fit into existing situations with established values to developing abilities to deal with change and to develop a core system of values that will give stability to the individual who will be required to change occupations many times.

In many urban centres, significant modification of the traditional school year and school day have been implemented, but many changes have not found their way into the smaller communities

where limited resources have worked against providing a range of educational alternatives. These tend to be the very communities in which the traditional school with limited choices has never adequately reflected the needs of the local population. However, many of these alternatives could be adapted to smaller communities to create smaller and more culturally appropriate classes and activities by utilizing community expertise and the community environment within a more flexible approach to what constitutes the school day.

In many larger jurisdictions, summer school, which is really the creation of a third semester that utilizes a different time frame than the other two, and spring night school, which is organized around two evening sessions per week from the beginning of May until the end of July, are just two of the ways traditional school time and course organization are currently being used.

Structural changes in curriculum organization and delivery which would impact on the school year: The suggestions for alternative concepts of organization that follow can open up new ways of making schooling more relevant and acceptable to off-reserve native people.

We have the semester programs. These programs, which reduce the number of subjects studied at one time from eight to four, move in the direction of meeting the needs for short-term accomplishment of goals and immediate reinforcement. However, the student with an irregular attendance pattern for family or economic reasons, or lack of motivation, is severely punished by the speed of content delivery and required mastery. Semestering has a tendency to push towards an increase in mastery of abstract concepts in a short period of time. This also works against the student who needs time to explore each concept, identify the personal relevance of the concept and apply it to daily life. It does, however, allow the student to begin programs or get a fresh start twice a year.

Quadmestered programs: This system breaks a credit into four equal parts. As each part is accomplished, 0.25 of a credit is awarded. Except in the compulsory credits where full credits or equivalents are required, a student may sample a program for 10 weeks and complete a portion of a credit, which is then awarded through his or her Ontario school record. This is very useful in noncompulsory credits where simple addition of partial credits adds up to the required total. In compulsory credits, it gives the advantage of enabling four entry periods and facilitates the repeating of a portion not fully understood. This is only possible in a school sufficiently large to have each phase of the credit offered in each quadmester.

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This system could be expanded if the school year was extended into five or six terms. In this case, any four terms would constitute a full credit and would enable the student to attend some terms and not others. This would increase the adaptability of a system to seasonal employment or cultural demands without jeopardizing the student's progress.

Modular credits: Any credit can be divided into any number of modules, which can be delivered in units of one week, two weeks, six weeks or 12 weeks. Students could accumulate modules towards a desired credit in a variety of patterns. In subjects that require the building of skills in a sequential manner, this would require that a number of modules be offered all of the time so that the student could freely choose the appropriate option at any time. In nonsequential subjects the demand for multiple offerings at any one time would be reduced, much as schools currently offer American history in one year and ancient history in another; the same skills can be taught at the appropriate level regardless of the subject content.

Point learning credits: A point credit system could be established similar to what is currently operating at the School of Experiential Education in Etobicoke. In that system, points measure the amount of work done towards the accomplishment of a credit. Some points are allocated towards attendance and group participation, while other points for work or presentations submitted for evaluation carry a grade mark.

In a 60-point credit, a core program of 30 points is established for the credit, which becomes the basis for the group meetings, and 30 points is negotiated with each student for independent or group work within the framework of the credit established by the Ministry of Education guidelines. This enables the student to participate in group sessions that are held once a week and to work independently at his or her speed and within his or her interest area of the subject.

Point credit/module system: This system combines the positive aspects of the two above systems and enhances flexibility of program delivery. Modules can be established and assigned a specific number of points; for example, 15 points would represent attendance and demonstrate mastery of core material. Students could contract for additional points if they wished to do

further study in a particular area. Several modules could be offered at the same time, which would allow some students to double their module achievement or to opt out for a module. Each module would be an autonomous portion of a credit that could be added to in a regular or irregular sequence.

Mastery learning: This is another version of the modular system of program delivery. In mastery learning, the module is built around the mastery of a particular skill. The student moves on at his or her own pace to the next skill when mastery of the first skill is demonstrated to be acceptable. Time is not a factor in mastery learning.

Shortened day: Another version of course reorganization could be to shorten the school day to a mini-timetable given in the morning, in the afternoon or in the evening and increase the number of days over which the credit is spread. This would give the student greater flexibility to select a specific portion of the day for school and devote the rest of the day to other activities such as work.

Single credit timetable: A common practice in continuing education is to offer 30-day credits in which a student works on a single credit full-time for six weeks and then moves on to another credit. This makes credit accomplishment a short-range goal. Credits could be taken any time the student could foresee a period of six weeks unbroken by other predictable demands that might cause absenteeism.

Lifestyle co-op credits: Under the ministry's mandate for co-op learning credits, a time equivalent to 110 hours of classroom instruction spent in practical activity in a work situation related to the academic study area results in the expansion of the credit from one to two credits. A recognition of the value of cultural activities, such as operating a trap line, etc., could open up an area of co-operative learning credits that would bring school into greater relevance for off-reserve natives.

This kind of credit could be organized in a number of ways that could be adjusted to the demands of the activity. One model would be to attend school for a portion of each day and to undertake the related community activity for the other portion of the day. Another version would be to attend school full-time for several credits and to take a month or five weeks out of school at the appropriate time to undertake the community work.

Mentorship programs: Entire credits or selected portions of credits could be set up using mentors from the community working with a single student or small groups of students. This is a common practice in programs for gifted students, and would work well with off-reserve native students and would fit into their cultural background.

A quotation from The Drop-out Phenomenon, 1988:

"Mentorships should be put in place and teacher time allocated to this end. Each student should meet with a teacher-mentor on a weekly basis and, where possible, the relationship should continue throughout the student's career at the school. Teacher-mentors whom the student likes and can identify with as role models should be chosen. A teacher's timetable should include at least one period a day devoted simply to mentoring. Should the student drop out of school, the mentor should be in immediate contact."

Mentorship could be considered an aspect of co-op expansion of a credit and could take place on a regular basis, with provision made for extended immersion periods where it would be appropriate; for example, to work with the mentor or an elder on a trap line.

Finally, our recommendations; and these structural changes in the organization and length of the school year and in the presentation of curricula could have a marked effect on the dropout rate among off-reserve native students:

1. A school that functions as a continuing part of the cultural life of the community during the entire year, rather than as a credit factory for 10 months, would enhance the concept of learning and make school a less alienating place for the off-reserve native students.

2. Credit programs could make better use of the stated goals and objectives of the Ministry of Education to create areas of study more relevant to the lives and the lifestyle demands of the off-reserve native students by beginning with their experience as the basis for learning.

3. Division of the curricula into short-term accomplishment, immediate results and credits rewards would better suit the students' needs for reinforcement and feedback.

4. Courses could be designed to be more experientially based–a hands-on approach–so that the beginning point of learning relates to the in-culture experience of the student.

5. A mastery learning approach to credit advancement rather than social promotion would help remediate noted deficiencies in basic skills in English and mathematics.

6. Credit programs could be restructured to be more visual and concrete rather than abstract.

7. Reorganization of credits into self-contained units or modules that are short-term and offered frequently over a 12-month period would suit the lifestyle demands of off-reserve native students.

8. Mentors from the community could be utilized as resource assistants for many aspects of credit work.

9. The Ministry of Education directives to make evaluation include teacher-student, peer and self evaluation equal parts of the evaluation process would facilitate a change towards utilizing the talented resources of the community and peer group in relating the curricula to lifestyle needs.

10. Extended relationship time with a mentor, as well as a school program that recognizes and validates the culture of off-reserve native students, would serve to build a more positive self-image, which is the basis for any achievement.

All of these recommendations call for a more creative use of the flexibility of time and curricula delivery that the Ministry of Education already offers in its guidelines. Teachers in systems that include minority groups need to be encouraged to broaden their understanding of the inherent values involved in the minority cultures and to tailor school programs to work with, as opposed to working in spite of, the cultural experience and values of their students.

The flexibility is there, but the permission to use it and to step outside what is or what has always been done is required to deal with the poor record of off-reserve native student achievement within the school system.

That is our report and I guess we are open for questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We have several questioners lined up; first, Mr. Johnston, followed by Mr. Villeneuve.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Recollet. It is good to see you all again before the committee with another very useful brief.

This is probably an unfair thing to do, but let me do it anyway. You probably missed the presentation by the francophones who were just here before us, but they basically were very concerned about moving to more of a kind of system that you are talking to here, which is much along the model of some of the California options we have seen.

I am not sure if there is a parallel or not, so I would like to hear a comment or two. One of the reasons they gave was that they presently have real trouble in the francophone education system in delivering all the options and programs that they would like to and that they are very concerned about moving to a year-long, more flexibly broken-down kind of organization because they are not really sure they could put it on.

I wonder if I could ask you to respond to that in terms of the fact that a lot of your off-reserve members who will be in the big cities are presently being pretty badly served by the system as it is and whether–again, speaking to the present system and not what you would like, that it be a native-controlled system–you see any parallels there or whether you see, for the reasons you have given here, that your situation is substantially different there.

Mr. Recollet: First of all, you are right, I was not here for the francophone presentation. I do not think they are here for ours either.

As I mentioned in our paper on the mentor and the learner, I think it has been carried through within the traditional lifestyles of the aboriginal people across Ontario and across Canada. We always learned to survive, before the first contact with Europeans or Asians. That has always been our traditional way of life and we have always found that we had no problem with survival prior to the first contact of–let me put it–white society.

Now you are trying to use the francophone–maybe we should start learning the French language? I am losing your drift here.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No, no. They just said that under their system right now they were having trouble providing all the options they would like to provide or that we provide, say in a big city, middle-class Anglo school at the moment, where you get the whole range of programs.

I guess what I am saying is that a lot of your off-reserve Metis members will be in inner-city schools that are already underresourced and underserviced and you are suggesting this approach as an option to it, which I am attracted to, frankly, but I just wanted to know if you would respond to that.

Mr. Recollet: Our presentation basically is based on a number of options. As I mentioned in my previous statement, we have always talked in our association about self-government, about the situation once we get that entrenched in the Canadian Constitution or finalize some concluding agreements with the province and the federal government.

We are trying to keep things simple here. Our people find, when they want to go to the educational system, whether it is specifically off-reserve or not, that we have our difficulties in coping with the mainstream society, not only in learning the English language but now the burden is placed of learning the French language. We would like to see, possibly, that aboriginal languages are taught in the schools and maybe that cultural problem would disappear.

Those are my points of view as to why we find our students, aboriginal students, dropping out. They are being taught a whole broad range of subjects that do not even relate or help them in the future. In fact, our impression is that all the school systems are doing today is preparing our students to reach a certain legal age, and once they reach that legal age, they have to depend on the welfare system or they are incarcerated.

I know I am getting off the track of your question. I would like to let Mr. Baker speak to it.

Mr. Baker: I think there are probably two points here. One has to do with the number of credits. What Mr. Recollet is saying, I think, is that a wide variety of the credits as they are currently offered have limited appeal to the Metis and off-reserve student anyway, and in fact most of them do not end up taking many of those options. They tend to be filed into basic-level programs which are already fairly limited in the scope that is offered in any particular school.

To address the second part of your question, I think it has to do with a different use of resources and I think there have been some really creative examples set up in the alternative schools.

I teach in the School of Experiential Education in Etobicoke and one of the ways we have dealt with that, with a very limited number of staff, is the creative use of time and money. For instance, I supervise social sciences but I have what amount to mentors; we call them educational assistants. I have five who teach areas I feel I am not really competent in; these people come in out of the community. Some of them are graduate students. Some of them are people who have taught who are now home with families, so some of them do have teaching certificates, but many of them simply have a real expertise and an interest within a particular area.

They are hired on the same basis as the night school. They are hired for teaching time at whatever it is–$23 an hour. It is a very inexpensive amount. I supervise the credit and look after the contracts with the students; they actually do the content work. It is a co-operative use, I think, of official teacher time and of community resources.

I think within this document, under the idea of mentorships, there is the same kind of creative use. It may not be in the area of bringing somebody in to teach German or sociology; it may be utilizing other credit areas by pulling in expertise from the community. I think it can be done very cheaply. We are already doing it and have been doing it for 15 years now.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are you an alternative school within the public system or outside of that?

Mr. Baker: Within the public system.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Let me just ask you, then, the question about mentorship, because it is obviously an attractive concept, one we embraced a lot in our first report. For your particular community it has particular meaning and more importance even than what we were talking about. How do you work that with the local teachers' unions in terms of the whole professional cadre that is there and the role of the mentors fitting into the present system? How does that work?

Mr. Baker: The reality is that in the area of the social sciences, I am the one with all of the paper qualifications and these people who are brought on as my five assistants are in fact just that; they are teaching assistants. I may or may not be constantly with them in the classroom, yet I monitor what is going on in the classroom. The official obligation rests on the teacher. It requires a real expansion of my time, but at the same time it is very different than teaching a regular timetable of 28 kids in a class or whatever. It is perfectly manageable. I find it really enjoyable.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It just changes the supervising teacher's role. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. Baker: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So if we move to the kind of options you are talking about, Mr. Recollet, you might have somebody who will come in from the local community–we will use your trapping example–someone who was a trapper for many years before coming to the city. Then under your supervision, he would try to do some experiential teaching around the concepts of trapping with those kids.

Mr. Baker: What is inherent in this is an unstated contract system in which the teacher and the mentor agree on what the program is and the contract is effectively established, whether it is written or verbal.

In the case you have given, were I a teacher in a Metis or off-reserve student school, what I might do is create a package in which there would be that experiential component and I would supervise the reflective paper, pulling out the material, trying to establish and get the student to become aware of what actually has been learned and move it into the academic context. That is part of my job. The role of the mentor is really that of facilitator, to bring in the student and hook the student into the learning process.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one last thing, if I might, looking at our inner-city example at the moment: You say year-long learning might be more appropriate to your community, but that community within the inner-city school is a very small minority often. How do you translate those community values into that inner-city school, even if you are adding a few mentors and that sort of thing into the system? How do you see that working in, let's say, the Regent Park area or Alexandra Park area in the city of Toronto where the native or Metis off-reserve community would be a maximum of five or six per cent, I would presume, within any of those individual schools?

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Mr. Baker: I think what Mr. Recollet said earlier is probably crucial to this, and that is the adaptability of the culture. I am not really sure whether it makes any difference whether you are in a rural community going out on a trap line or whether you are in an urban centre doing something else that is appropriate to that particular environment. I think the important thing has to do with the style in which it is done and the relationship that develops. It is a different approach to learning and it fits within the culture.

I think it says here that the content is not really always the important thing. We recognize that now when we say, "You can take the content of any history course and you can teach the same skills through it." So I do not think the actual content is important. Does that help?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes, a bit. Forgetting the premise you are working on, that you are moving towards a native control system where you would have control over decision-making within the system, which would allow this to take place. Even looking at a progressive board such as that of the city of Toronto, I just wonder how a board would provide the resources to allow that to actually work rather than to be another exercise in failure.

Mr. Baker: I think they actually do it through Wandering Spirit Survival Elementary School, as an example.

Mr. Recollet: Why create a problem if the problem just should not exist? I think what we are trying to go after is having self-government in our communities, our aboriginal communities and Metis settlements.

For some reason, if you take Toronto it is going to be in the slums, similar to New York City. You are going to have kids who are going to grow up in the side streets who will never go in education further than grade six and will use a lot of street-talk language. We do not want our people to be like that. We want to keep our people at home in a rural setting in their aboriginal communities. We do not want to bring them into a large urban area and be faced with problems they have never witnessed, their parents have never witnessed and their grandparents have never witnessed.

You are opening a whole new can of worms and we are trying to prevent that by trying to offer you suggestions. We do not want to encourage our people to start migrating to the city of Toronto because Toronto is not a very nice place for a lot of people.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was not advocating that. I was saying that this is where a lot are at the moment. You could use the example of Sault Ste. Marie, or if you want to use a smaller town where I can see it really working quite easily, it would be Burleigh Falls or that kind of area. I was just saying those are at least three kinds of communities I could see your people in right at the moment. I like a lot of the things you are suggesting. I am just trying to figure out exactly how they would end up being implemented without your control, which is not there at this stage; that was all.

Mr. Baker: Probably another urban reality is that culture groups tend to cluster. Within our own Toronto schools, it is really easy to identify the Chinese population. You have significant numbers of a minority culture.

I was going to say that it is not by accident that Wandering Spirit is located in the part of Toronto where it is. That could also be incorporated as part of a school within a school. I think there can probably be programs, as we have in schools anyway, where we have either departmental approaches or program approaches within the same school that are quite different. I think we can probably fuse this into an existing school without too much problem.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I hope you are right. My experience is maybe coloured by the way Scarborough has dealt with things like the Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes where no-

body, including the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education, would take responsibility for the counselling assistance that has been requested. I worry whether the present structure is moving in the directions you are talking about. I do not want to be too negative.

Mr. Bjornaa: I do not think we have any problem identifying what areas our native people are within. I think that automatically, when you see a school bus come in–I do not care where you are, whether you are in Sault Ste. Marie or Toronto or wherever–you say, "That's a native bus, but this one over here is a white bus." I think you pretty well know as well as we do where the native areas are and where they are not. We have proven this time and time again.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Johnston. For a moment, I got quite frightened here when you were not coming through on the microphone. I thought you were going to have to repeat all your comments again.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Steve has taken notes as usual, and I would be glad to repeat them for you.

Madam Chairman: Maybe later. Mr. Villeneuve, a final question.

Mr. Villeneuve: Gentlemen, thank you very much for your presentation. Certainly, you present a unique situation. I think your recommendations make a great deal of sense for your people. What I have a great deal of difficulty with is that in your last statement the flexibility is there, but the permission to use it and to step outside of what is or what has always been done is required.

This, again, is amazing, as it was in your first presentation. I am sure that if you put your recommendations to the people who are animal rights activists or the people who maybe have something to do with teachers' unions, they might not agree with you. I guess you are telling us that they have far more jurisdiction over your people: "Do as we say. It doesn't make a great deal of difference how you feel about things that are happening." I guess you feel your hands are tied at this stage.

Mr. Recollet: I do not know if you are reading the same paper I am reading. When I read that, the way I visualize it on paper is what our people have been confronted with for the past 200 or 300 years. We have been forced to get an educational experience out of this agricultural school system, whatever you want to call it, created by the European or Anglo-European society. Traditionally, we have learned from our elders how to survive, and now you are trying to make reference to our association working alongside unions, which is totally ridiculous.

What we have been trying to tell you people here at the select committee on education is that our people have been forced to go under the guidelines of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities in this province. We are not going outside that realm. I went through the system. I had no union to tell me which school to go to or what other organization to go to. I had to go through a school system that was created by the provincial government. I do not know which party it was at that time. I was not happy going through that system.

All we are trying to do right now–I do not want to start bringing outside interferences into our presentation–is to make recommendations to this committee on how our people grew up through this system and how it has not really suited us appropriately. It is not enticing enough even to finish high school or post-secondary school.

Mr. Villeneuve: This is really what I am referring to.

Mr. Recollet: There is no mention about unions in my paper.

Mr. Villeneuve: I realize that. But if these recommendations were put forth to a union that represents the teaching profession, I think they would have a little problem with them, and that is where you run into snags.

Mr. Recollet: I am here to seek resolutions, not to lead to problems. That is part of your committee's work, to seek resolutions to those problems, to listen to our recommendations.

Mr. Villeneuve: Let's look at the mentorship, for instance. I think that is probably the way your people would learn a great deal from your elders. What would be the requirement for a mentor to go and teach a dozen, a half a dozen or even one individual within the school system? Does it exist? Can it happen?

Mr. Recollet: It all depends where numbers warrant. Have you been up around the Cochrane area or the James Bay area?

Mr. Villeneuve: I am not familiar with that.

Mr. Recollet: The majority of the school kids up there are Ojibway or Cree. They do not speak French, let alone English. They know darn well that they will not succeed in the outside world, in the white society in the large urban areas. So the curriculum or the education has to be streamlined. Those individuals, from grade 1, or even junior kindergarten, right through grade 8 to

secondary school and post-secondary school have to be taught certain survival skills so that they can go back to their communities and be a useful part of those communities. That has not been done yet.

Mr. Villeneuve: Does mentorship work up there? Has it been tried?

Mr. Recollet: It has been working, but at the same time under the current guidelines our people have to go to the provincial schools. Sometimes they are taught better at home and they survive longer. They do not have the bad effects of the outside world, of the white society, all the drugs and the prostitution, etc., which they learn in large urban areas. They do not have that at home, let alone the diseases and health problems.

Mr. Villeneuve: This is basically what I think I am coming at, and this is what this particular committee will have to look at, a set of rules that fits the requirements of the aboriginal people. Right now I think you know or have a pretty good idea of what is good for you, except you have not been able to apply it.

1700

Mr. Baker: Maybe I could comment. Your original question had to do with who could be a mentor and what the requirements of the mentor were. I think there are probably two. One is expertise in a particular area that would match the interest of a student or a small group of students. I guess the second thing would be a willingness and an ability on the part of the mentor to relate to those students and to work up a relationship with them.

As far as the federation is concerned, mentorships are used a lot now. They are used particularly in the gifted programs. They tend to take place outside of school hours, although I know of programs where time has been allocated within the school for students to meet with their mentor. It is sort of a falsification of what a mentoring relationship is all about, but the core idea is there, I think probably in the same situation as operates now, as far as I know just with gifted students; although the co-op work program is a kind of mentorship program in which the school supervises the person who is acting in the role of mentor, and that may be on a weekly basis, through reports, but it is also in a counselling situation.

I know that when there is a full co-op program, one counsellor is assigned as the co-op counsellor who in fact troubleshoots with the students, helps them deal with their onsite problems, smooths things over and things like that and deals with the kind of learning that is going on.

The same kind of system can be adapted in any community. I do not think the federation would find any problem with that at all, because in fact the teaching per se and the control of credits still really remain with the school. It is the responsibility of the teacher and the administration of the school to supervise that program.

We have certainly not found any conflict with our own school and we use it extensively. The gifted programs I have taught and have been related to have used that same kind of concept. They have been largely university professors and therefore may have a certain aura that would make them acceptable within the educational community, whereas somebody whose expertise might be on doing something related to the traditional culture, as in trapping, skinning and preparing hides and things like that, may not have that same educational aura, but the reality is that it is the same.

Mr. Villeneuve: The trap line time is about here now. Is this taught in school or did the aboriginal people not really learn that prior to going to school?

Mr. Bjornaa: The thing is, you could have run a trap line all your life and got it down. If you are going to take any of your parent's trap lines over, whatever it is, do you have to go a special school to learn that? No. It is a system.

Just further to what you were saying, right now the Ministry of Natural Resources takes junior rangers from big cities out into the country to teach them all about the wild; they have the best trainers, park managers. Here are our kids within these communities who need to work, who really need this money to go back to school, and they are deprived of that. They are not only deprived of their native culture, when they have worked there all their lives and have been brought up there; they are deprived of the jobs, of the learning skills.

We have yet to see Natural Resources bring a student from any place to learn what happens in the cities for those two months of the year. The thing has been all one way. This gentleman said earlier something about the tail wagging the dog? I guess this is what has happened to our people. I think you put it well.

It is there right now. The system is there. The government has already established it that way. They take junior rangers and put them out in those communities all over. I think you have all seen it. A lot of the schools play a part in that in big cities. Yet our people, native people off-

reserve, do not have one break on that. The handwriting is on the wall.

Mr. Villeneuve: Very interesting. Thank you.

Mr. Baker: Just as a further comment on that: Things like junior rangers, from my perspective now sit completely outside the educational system as far as credits are concerned, but that kind of program under some kind of supervision and some kind of program I would see as absolutely ideal for, for instance a four-credit program on personal life management. It is an ideal credit base that could be incorporated as optional additional summer credits for those students.

But I also agree very much with Mr. Bjornaa. The return opportunity is never there. I think probably dealing with skills that would help people coming from rural or reserve areas adapt and live in a city, where many of them will likely end up, could certainly be incorporated into a credit program in which some kind of preparation is done and some kind of debriefing is done afterwards. It might even be done under the supervision of a teacher.

Mr. Bjornaa: I went to a meeting with some of our students about some of this interchange and a lot of our students feel, and I think we as native people feel too, what the Good Lord giveth, the government taketh right out of the communities; it is the handwriting on the wall.

Madam Chairman: It may not only be Metis people who feel that way. A final question from Mrs. O'Neill.

Mrs. O'Neill: I found your brief extremely insightful. I really feel you understand educating a child. I am very interested in this junior ranger tale that you tell. Have you made representations to the Ministry of Natural Resources about this?

Mr. Bjornaa: In fact, just a couple of weeks ago there was another culture meeting in Toronto and Lorraine Gisborn, one of our presidents of zone 5, which is the Toronto area, brought up that we felt this had a very important part to play. I have brought it up in other, small communities. I felt there was a lot of good learning experience. I think both sides can learn, our children as well as your children if it went into place. In fact, Alan Pope made it very clear that he would personally pick the students if he had to.

Mrs. O'Neill: I appreciate your bringing that to our committee's attention.

May I just ask one final question? Do your children participate in co-op programs? Do you find that helpful or have you found that they do not want to remove themselves into–I guess there are all kinds of co-op programs, and I am sure you know what I am speaking of. Do the native children like that kind of experience and are there any structures that fit your needs at all that could be emphasized more? I guess that is the train of thought I am trying to get at.

Mr. Baker: I think the way co-op has traditionally worked is it is literally seen as a work-study program. The work tends to be within the sort of community of the school, but it is within the urban context. To my knowledge, things that relate to the Metis and native culture are not really considered part of a co-op credit. We tend to think in terms of factories, hospitals, social agencies. It is really in urban activities, to my knowledge anyway, where almost all the co-op credits are presently being undertaken. I do not think there is a native student or a Metis student who has been encouraged to look at working on a trap line as part of a co-op credit.

Mrs. O'Neill: With your experience in experiential education, I presume you feel that it would be quite possible to develop programs.

Mr. Baker: Oh, absolutely.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: I did say Mrs. O'Neill had a final question. Actually, I said Mr. Villeneuve had a final question, but Mr. Miclash assures me this is really the final question.

Mr. Miclash: Very short.

Getting back to the junior ranger program, I was involved with the program for four summers and I agree it has to be one of the best programs we have in the province, but my understanding today is that we do not have enough students who are interested in filling the positions that are offered in the program.

Mr. Villeneuve: Not this year.

Mr. Miclash: That is what I am hearing. I have heard that from the ministry and I know of two camps that have been cut back because there just were not the number of students there. They were not willing to go up for the amount of money being offered in the program.

Mr. Bjornaa: I guess I can quite agree with you on some of that, because for a lot of students who live in the big cities it costs a lot. They figure they are going to make a lot more than they do.

For our students in our small communities, they have yet to open the door and offer it to them. I come from close to Sault Ste Marie, a small village, Batchawana. Not one of our students has got in. I think if we went and fought for it, they would say it is out.

Mr. Miclash: Have they applied? Do you have applicants who–

Mr. Bjornaa: I have asked a number of times.

Mr. Miclash: It does take an application. As I say, I have been in touch with the ministry a number of times on this and officers say they are just not getting the applicants for the program. I am really surprised to hear that.

Mr. Bjornaa: It was made very well known in our small communities that this was specifically for students from the cities, not for the small areas. We were told that right straight.

Mr. Miclash: No; I disagree, because there have been people from the smaller communities in my riding in northwestern Ontario who have gone into the program and have been very successful. That program is open to students all across the province. There are applications in every high school for the people who are of that age, 16 and 17. There should be applications in every high school for those children.

As I say, my understanding is there are just not enough applicants for the program.

Mr. Bjornaa: You know, I do not like to put it this way, but I will: A lot of the people who work for the Ministry of Natural Resources in small areas on school boards and stuff–in a lot of areas, the handwriting is on the wall on who is going to get the good grades and who is not. I mean, a native child does not have a proper lunch and there are lots of days he will miss school. The parents are not there to look after him. He puts an application in. He needs that work; but he ain't going to get it.

I have been raised in a small community, and believe me, I know the good points and the bad points.

Madam Chairman: I have also found that things vary from area to area. You are from northwestern Ontario, so it may well be that there you have lots of room and in another maybe they do not, but it would certainly be worth looking into it. The rule should not vary from one area to the other.

Mr. Bjornaa: I am not saying it is all bad. There is some good there too; a lot of good, believe me.

Mr. Baker: The Ministry of Education is really interpreted very differently by different school boards, so what an official program is may be interpreted quite differently locally, I agree.

Madam Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association for bringing your concerns and also your excellent and sensitive ideas to us today. We very much appreciate your contribution.

Just before committee members go, I have one brief announcement about scheduling changes. If you have your schedule with you, on Wednesday, which is tomorrow, if I am not incorrect, the 11:30 appointment cannot make it. On Thursday, March 30, the final presentation of the day will be at 3:30 by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, OECTA.

Mrs. O'Neill: Would you repeat tomorrow, please?

Madam Chairman: Tomorrow, the 11:30 appointment cannot make it, so that will be cancelled.

Mrs. O'Neill: We are still going at 10, though.

Madam Chairman: We are still starting at 10. Then on Thursday, March 30, the final delegation of the day will be at 3:30, and that will be OECTA.

The select committee on education shall stand adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

The committee adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

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Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Length of School Day and School Year
Education Financing



First Session, 34th Parliament
Wednesday, March 29, 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, March 29, 1989

The committee met at 10:09 a.m. in room 151.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR

EDUCATION FINANCING
(continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. A representative from the Conservative Party has just joined us, so we will begin our hearings. Welcome to the select committee on education, as we continue to focus on the length and organization of the school day and the school year.

I am pleased that our first presentation today will be by the Ontario Federation of Labour. As you are aware, it is very important to get the labour and business perspective on this, so we are very delighted to welcome Jim Turk back to our organization.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We need some order first, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Yes, I ask all those who are not participating in the hearings if we could perhaps have some quiet and listen to Dr. Turk's words of wisdom.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Dr. Turk: It is brave of you to say that before I start. We welcome the opportunity to appear before this committee in the third phase of its hearings. While we want to address our remarks to the issue of the extension of the school year, we will preface them with two comments.

The first is our regret that the first report of this committee dealt so timidly with the issue of streaming and ability grouping. Without a more aggressive effort to eliminate ability grouping in the elementary years, it will be largely irrelevant what is attempted with respect to the elimination of streaming in secondary school.

At the secondary level, pushing the formal streaming from grade 9 to grade 10 is a compromise that does virtually nothing to deal with the problems of streaming that critics have documented. Streaming must be entirely eliminated. The partial elimination you proposed will give the appearance of change without any useful substance.

Our second comment is to express disappointment that the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) has announced the reintroduction of standardized tests, likely for grades 3, 6 and 8. This seems contrary to the spirit of your first report. While only diagnostic, the standardized testing will become the focus of teachers' attention, will impose culturally biased and limited testing and will necessarily ignore the uniqueness of each child. The overall effect will be to harm the quality of education available to children in this province.

As we argued in a previous brief to this committee, the minister's concern with accountability, which we share, can be better addressed in other ways that will not be destructive of the educational process. Our concern with the minister's initiative is heightened by the fact that it runs counter to the near-unanimous recommendation against standardized testing by the minister's own Provincial Advisory Committee on Evaluation, Policies and Practices. We hope such disregard of carefully considered advice will not characterize the minister's response to the work of this committee.

Our principal concern in this brief is the issue of the extension of the school year. The concept has a certain initial appeal in terms of fuller use of capital equipment, particularly in a period when funding for education is less than adequate. Several hundred schools in the United States, as you well know, are running year-round.

A closer examination of the issue leads us to feel that year-round schooling would be disruptive for families and communities, would create a number of economic problems for young people, would produce difficulties for schools that could affect the quality and accessibility of education, and in the end would not likely save money.

Historically, the organization of the school year has been a major influence in the social organization of life in Ontario. Families, communities and economic life are all significantly shaped by decisions about when schools will be open. Changing the existing pattern is not properly just an educational decision; it is a decision that must be made in consideration of all those affected.

The disruptive potential of year-round schooling is profound for family life. Year-round

schooling may leave the family with no common time for family holidays. It is already difficult to juggle schedules as a result of several family members being in the paid labour force. Adding a year-round schooling schedule for children may make extended shared time for families nearly impossible.

The effects on day-to-day family life will also be extensive. Day care arrangements are difficult under the best of circumstances, with the shortage of affordable day care spaces. March break and Christmas break pose special problems for families with children in day care. Moving to a year-round school year, with longer intersessions, would exacerbate difficulties.

If a multiphased model of extended schooling were adopted, different siblings could be in school on different rotations, complicating not only child care but every aspect of family life.

The family is not the only aspect of the child's life that would be made more difficult. Even with the simplest year-round models, with everyone on the same sequence but with longer intersessions, community activities for children would be jeopardized. Summer camps, extended community arts and cultural programs, extended remediation and upgrading require a long break to prepare programs, train staff and have enough sequence of programs to make them financially viable. Further, in many communities such programs require a common break to have enough children as participants and enough adolescents as staff.

Summer has traditionally been the period when the community has significant access to a variety of school facilities: pools, gyms, theatres, shops and classrooms for community activities. With no extended break, such facilities would not be available in a useful way. Some programs require a more extensive period than intersessions would allow. Further, routine maintenance, usually tacked on to the beginning or the end of the summer, would not allow any other use of facilities during a shorter intersession.

The current summer holiday is the period when students can work full time, often at higher pay. This is partly possible because students have a 10-week break in which to work, making initial training feasible for better-paying jobs. Employment opportunities during the summer are greater because so many regular workers need to be replaced as a result of holidays.

If the school breaks were divided into equal length intersessions, each would be too short for many of the full-time jobs students currently do in summers. If schools were open year-round with one long break at different times for different students, only those students with a summer break would have access to the many jobs that become available as a result of summer replacement needs. This would create economic hardships for many young people.

The impact on businesses in the community would not be inconsequential. Many rely on students to maintain their economic activities during the summer holiday period.

Increased pressure to work during school sessions and lessened ability to earn money will affect academic performance and accessibility. The link to performance is obvious. More part-time work will diminish academic achievement for many students. As George Radwanski and others have noted, part-time work during the school year is already undertaken by the majority of secondary school students, often to the serious detriment of their academic performance. Heightening the need to work during school sessions will only worsen this situation.

The link to accessibility may be less clear. A considerable number of young people, primarily from working-class families, work out of economic necessity. Making it more difficult for them to earn money will lessen the likelihood they will continue in school past school-leaving age. With all the current emphasis on dropout prevention, it would be unfortunate to take a step that would increase the dropout rate.

The quality of education will also be compromised. While the specific form in which year-round schooling was implemented would have different effects, many will have negative consequences for many aspects of educational life. Consider, for example, the difficulties in assuring a full range of subjects and a full complement of appropriate subject specialists in a secondary school running year-round.

The extended summer break has been an important time for teacher upgrading. It it not clear that adequate professional development can be undertaken during shorter intersession breaks. A year-round operation will also eliminate administrators' traditional planning and review time.

Just as year-round operation can cause family difficulties by putting siblings on different schedules, it can also be disruptive of friendships and student body solidarity.

Many of the necessary maintenance functions traditionally done in the summer break will have to be integrated into school sessions. We will discuss the cost implications in the next section.

Apart from cost, the effects will be disruptive to classes and will create health and safety concerns for students and teachers.

Finally, anyone who has spent any part of a summer in most Ontario schools can testify to their unsuitability during hot weather. Few have air conditioning and few have an architectural design that makes them suitable for hot weather use. Oppressive heat and humidity are hardly conducive to productive learning.

It is not even clear that year-round operation would significantly reduce costs. While it would ease pressure for new school construction in expanding boards, it would introduce a host of additional expenses. A major item would be compensation for teachers and administrators. The nature and extent of the additional professional salary costs would vary, depending on the approach to year-round schooling adopted. Whatever model, there would be additional salary costs.

There would also be significantly higher maintenance costs necessitated by having to perform major maintenance and renovation while school is in session. More work would have to be done on evening and night shifts and on overtime to minimize the disruption.

The wear and tear on the physical plant will be greater with year-round use. Similarly, many of the educational materials such as textbooks will wear out more quickly. There will also be new costs to make schools more suitable for summer usage: better ventilation systems, air conditioning or other changes to adapt the facility for a use not intended when it was built.

The disadvantages to year-round programming are substantial. Are there advantages to outweigh them? We could not identify them. Some have suggested students will benefit from greater continuity of learning, but the evidence we have examined suggests the greatest loss of information and skills occurs in the first few weeks of a break. It is not clear that eliminating the long summer break will have a consequential effect on retention of information or skills.

Others have cited flexibility of scheduling as an advantage. As we noted above, we feel the scheduling disadvantages are remarkable.

While we understand the need for the committee to examine the year-round option, we hope you will do so quickly in order to be able to move on to more substantial matters that are likely to make a significant contribution to improving Ontario's educational system.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. You have certainly stated your ideas very concisely and very forcefully. Before we go to members for questions, I would like to comment on your opening remarks about the timidity of the committee on the streaming issue. I should perhaps clarify that it was the most difficult issue we faced and it was the one on which it was most difficult to achieve consensus.

While some people were opposed philosophically and pedagogically on the basis that streaming was not advantageous for certain students who had many systemic barriers to overcome, other people were not philosophically opposed to streaming. They just felt that the transition period from grade 8 to grade 9 was not the time to introduce streaming.

Like all compromises, perhaps it does not please either end of the spectrum. I knew we had a fairly balanced report when we were roundly condemned the same day by one of the major teachers' federations for going too far on streaming, and roundly condemned the very next day by another teachers' federation for not going far enough on streaming.

1020

Mr. Mahoney: That's our job, make no one happy.

Madam Chairman: That's right.

I just wanted to clarify that there were two very different motivations for that recommendation, some because they were philosophically opposed to streaming and others because they felt it was just a difficult transition period. So it may not have been timidity as much as consensus building. I will now open it up for questions.

Mr. Beer: I think one of the interesting things with your brief, Dr. Turk, is that we have had a number of submissions with a lot of questioning and wondering, and one of the obvious aspects of your brief is that there is not so much wondering but a fairly clear direction.

My question is around some of the assumptions we make about how society is organized right now and some of the assumptions we make about everybody going away for the summer holiday with the family, and a number of things. Do we really know if the reality is the same? If we were just looking–for example, you and your colleagues were looking at this from the point of view of the importance of the summer vacation break. You are quite right that it is very important for a number of kids, either to make money because they absolutely need it or simply because it provides them with more independence.

But as we look at the changes, for example in the tourist industry, broadly speaking throughout Ontario there are areas where there is activity in

both winter and summer; and when we look at changes in a number of other sectors is it the feeling of the federation that those would still be fairly inconsequential in terms of the kinds of jobs students could get?

You mentioned Radwanski. The reality right now is that if you talk to principals at high schools they are concerned about the amount of time kids are spending in part-time jobs, for whatever reason. I had not thought of it in terms of the way you put it, that if you go to different kinds of breaks perhaps they would not be able to make as much and therefore they would have to try to find jobs then and also in these other sessions.

What kind of research, in a sense, as opposed to more obvious assumptions, brought you to that conclusion in terms of year-long? I would have thought one could also perhaps make the argument that a different kind of year-round option might provide students with greater variety in terms of some of those other options they have.

Dr. Turk: I think there are a couple of issues. First, we have not been able to find really good data indicating patterns of vacationing. There are data you can get from tourist organizations and there are a variety of data available, but none of them give an overall picture.

Clearly, people take holidays at a diversity of times. Longer vacation periods are becoming more common. Certainly in the collective agreements that have been negotiated, ones we are aware of and that we look at in the Ministry of Labour's database indicate that people in a shorter period of time are able to accumulate three, four or five weeks. It is not uncommon in most collective agreements now, after 20 or 25 years, to have six weeks' holidays.

There is more time for holidays and that is why we find patterns of working people being able to take a week in the winter. But it was our sense, and we talked pretty widely with our member organizations about this, that the summer is still seen as the key period. If you look at the pattern of when plants have their shutdowns, if they have shutdowns, when most people, at least from the reports we got, in fact go on holidays; and what is seen as more of a downtime for the whole family, if one were going to identify any one particular time it tends to be the summer.

The other part of it that you noted is that we think it is important for there to be an extensive break for kids. For cultural and social reasons, that has come to be important.

If you notice one thing in our brief, we did not try, as I am sure many other groups will attempt, to suggest that the decision you are making on the school year will have profound pedagogical consequences. Of all the things you are considering, this seems to us to be one of the least consequential. If you will look at whether kids are in school three or four weeks longer as a result of having intersessions in a school year model, or whether there are shorter breaks or longer breaks, one can make an argument either way. I do not think it is a big matter in terms of the educational significance of it.

Certainly we know the pattern we have now was not set for pedagogical reasons but for quite other reasons, and I think it is those other broader social and cultural reasons that really should guide your committee's decision. I do not think one can make a very good case educationally one way or the other.

Mr. Beer: We have recognized in the presentations to us, and also in the material which our research staff brought together when they were down in California at the conference there in February, that in looking at the American experience there were a number of reasons different areas went for this system, and not all, by any means, were on a pedagogical base.

One of the interesting things that came out–I think it was in the California research–was that they felt for what they defined as inner-city kids that in their terms there had been some kind of a benefit, although others have said they question that; and you made the point as well about the length of time at the break, that is the length of time or simply just having a break of a couple of weeks or so. The data you used for that–again we were interested also in where people got their information, because it may be different in areas from which we received ours.

Dr. Turk: Okay, I can send those to you. I do not have the references with me.

Mr. Beer: That is fine. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Beer. Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thanks, Madam Chairman. I am just giving leadership advice to Tory candidates. With my vast success in this area–

Mr. Keyes: You might give advice over here.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think he took it for what it was worth. He stayed 33 seconds.

Madam Chairman: I am glad to see you are talking right into the mike today on important issues.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am leaning into my mike. My difficulty is that I had too much room yesterday. I have left this chair available for visiting Tory leadership candidates to stop by, so that I will make sure I speak into the mike.

Mr. Beer: We are going to be worried about speaking to you now.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: He did have an interesting suggestion, though, and that is that perhaps we should make the length of the school year into a local option. I put that out to the Liberals on the committee.

I wanted to raise a couple of matters with you, if I could, because you do raise an enormous number of difficulties with moving anywhere in terms of the rest of society. As somebody was putting it yesterday, the education system is sort of like a tail wagging the dog of society in terms of the organization of our time. It seems to me we already have a fair amount of flexibility within our system and that the 185-day period that everybody seems to talk about is actually not as rigidly adhered to as one might expect.

I will just give you some examples. When we talk about the need for family to have this time together, if you have a kid in the elementary panel that child is probably there until June 28 or whatever. If you have another child who is in the secondary panel and is doing well, probably he is out by June 10 with no exams or whatever. So you have one group of kids in a family that is out for about 12 weeks over the summer and another group that is out for substantially less than that. We accept that kind of differentiation at this stage within the family and people seem to be able to accommodate that.

An example was given yesterday of the North Shore of Lake Superior changing the spring break on its own, as a local option, to a two-week spring break in March in order to alleviate the rigours of winter for people living in that blessed area.

1030

Mr. Mahoney: How blessed?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Blessed with weather, with weather; weather all winter long, as a matter of fact, having been chased by snow storms along that shore many times.

We have a number of boards that I can think of which have substantial summer programs; and not just remediation programs, which is what we always seem to talk about. I think of the Wellington separate board which for a number of years has been offering courses for kids in sign language and a range of other kinds of things which are there as part of what is really a full year of learning for those kids.

I am wondering whether maybe we are not caught up too much in the jargon of what full-year schooling would be or whether we do not have a fair amount of flexibility right now and people at this stage adapt fairly well around it.

Dr. Turk: It is our sense–I am being repetitive–that this is not really a big issue.

Mrs. O'Neill: You seem to have said that before.

Dr. Turk: Yes. If you have stated that this is something you want to hear deputations on, it is going to become an issue because people are going to bring in different views and you can get caught up in it. I will answer your comment in a minute, but if you are going to stir up people's interest and antagonism over issues, I hope you do it over the weighty issues like funding and streaming and those kinds of things.

To get into a fight with different groups–I am sure you are going to hear a range of positions on this issue, but the problem you have, I suspect, is a little bit like the problem of polling: everyone will give you his opinion in response to a poll, but you want to measure not only the diversity of opinion but the depth of feeling on it.

While there may be a diversity of views with regard to the school year, I am not sure any group sees that as a central issue to deal with. But as soon as you recommend a change in it, either to keep it as it is or to change it, a lot of us will start yelling or applauding, depending on our views. We used the word "timidity." Timidity is often what one has to do when one has to compromise. But you are going to have to make some controversial recommendations, and I hope you save those for the big issues and not for this.

Mr. Beer: We should be timid.

Dr. Turk: Be timid on this. Do not be timid on streaming or funding or whatever.

In a sense, Mr. Johnston, I think you have identified a key point: that is, there is already a fair amount of flexibility. There are a lot of summer programs and high school programs. They are optional; nobody is forced into them but people who want them can have them. Has the committee been made aware that there is a great demand for this kind of change or is there a serious suggestion that changing from 180 to 190 or having six-week breaks as opposed to a long summer break is going to make a big difference to anybody? I am just not aware that you can make a case that it is going to make a big difference.

That was the difficulty in writing the brief: it is not going to make a huge difference if you do do it. We think it is going to be, on balance, disadvantageous, but it is not going to be the end of the world one way or the other. Given the important things that do make a difference, I think that is where our attention should be. We are looking forward to appearing before you on the issue of funding.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Soon.

Dr. Turk: Soon.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Guaranteed it will be soon.

Mr. Mahoney: Why don't you tell us a little bit more on funding?

Dr. Turk: No, our words on funding we want to be very carefully considered; they will not be off the cuff.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think your concerns are shared by the committee, at least in a subcutaneous kind of way. We are not sure exactly how far we want to go with all this. We are listening and hearing, but I think a lot of the concerns you have enunciated so clearly are concerns that other members have as well here.

If we were to look at this from another angle, going back to what Walter Pitman talked to us about, which is, "Forget the organization for the sake of organization–that is really not going to change things at all–but let's look at what we are doing in the school day, in the school year," two other big issues do come up a lot.

One, from parents especially, is in general an overcrowded curriculum, the notion that there is just too much crowded in at the moment in the length of school day that we have and the school year that we have. Then look at the other major issue, which for a certain group in society is important, for people like me, and that is the notion of maybe looking at the status of heritage language and where it should be within the school day rather than external to the school day.

If you look at it in those terms, in other words, around pedagogy and what you can actually accomplish in terms of teaching, there are certain restrictions that some would argue are there now in the five-and-a-half-hour school day–forgetting the custodial care that is involved in the system–and the length of the school year we have now in terms of being able to accommodate all the things we want to get through to kids in a complicated society or add to the core, such as heritage language.

Are there reasons for looking at the school day after you deal with those issues, but not before you deal with them, if I can put it that way?

Dr. Turk: I do not think extending the school day or school year will solve either of those issues, quite frankly. Whenever one talks to virtually everyone in education, they are complaining because boards or the ministry or someone has given them another thing to include in the day.

I met with some officials from the Wellington county board yesterday and they were talking about the need to separate the wheat from the chaff in terms of what is in the curriculum, but the problem is we do not have very much agreement on what is wheat and what is chaff. I can think of loads of things I would like to eliminate and I am sure each of you would have a different list. If you extend the school year or school day, that debate will continue. I do not think that is a solution, nor do I think it is a solution specifically with regard to heritage language, and we strongly support heritage language programs and the integration of them into the school day.

It does not make any happier the people who are not happy with the fact that you have extended the school day or the school year to do that, and the political fallout of telling all the kids in Ontario that they are going to have to go to school for a longer period of time so heritage language could be added to the curriculum–it is not something I think most of the immigrant-ethnic communities would be too pleased with either. I think those are serious problems; but they are going to be with us whatever way you go on this one.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They are very good points. Thank you.

Mrs. Cunningham: Yesterday I made the comment that if we could promise parents that there would be no more portables and that everyone could have their family holiday together, we could probably look seriously at this issue.

I enjoyed your brief; quite frankly, you have a lot of common sense. I would underline your concerns about streaming and standardized testing, and maybe we could get this into our report if enough of us feel strongly about it so there may be some real purpose to this committee. I agree that there are bigger issues that I personally, and I know others, would have liked to study during this time.

I would like to ask you a couple of questions with regard to time, that have to do with some secondary programs. As you know, there has been a real emphasis on co-operative programs, and this relates a bit to your comments about streaming. In looking at how we educate our

secondary school students–it may start in grades 7 and 8, and I am certainly flexible on that; in fact, I think it does–I was at Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology last week talking about apprenticeship programs and was advised very strongly that apprenticeship programs are very different from what they were even five or 10 years ago. They are such high-technology programs that, really, people who are going on to colleges and universities are the ones who are qualifying for that particular level. What we are really missing is what one might call a para-apprentice, for want of a better word; it is my own phrase.

Apprentices need others to help them at different levels. It could be what we would probably consider basic-level students and others; you would call it streaming. There is room for those students at the community colleges, and the community colleges would love to have them. It is continuing education for them and it is something we could start on anyway in grade 9; now I am relating to Radwanski and retention rates, dropout rates.

I just wondered if you had any comments on that. I see it as something we should be doing now, not thinking about for the future. Have you thought about how this could fit into the school year? How could we do all of this training? I am talking about skills training which I think should be part of a secondary curriculum to a point and should be part of the world of work to the other point. Would summers not help us here, or more flexibility in semesters? Had you given that one any thought?

1040

Dr. Turk: Yes, we have given that a lot of thought. There are a couple of issues.

At the most general level, we have a concern about saying that the purpose of schooling should focus more on skills training. There is a lot of pressure. A lot of the criticism of the educational system is that kids coming out of it are not equipped for the jobs in which they find themselves and that the school should better equip them.

That sometimes takes the form that they need to be better educated. It sometimes takes the form of a criticism that they have not had enough job-related training. At the same time, many of the same critics will say: "Things are changing. Kids coming out today can't count on having the same jobs for their whole lives. They are going to have four or five careers as a result of how rapidly things are changing."

For us, that means it is more important than ever for them not to have narrow skills training in high school. For many of them, high school will be the last full-time educational experience they will have. If they are going to have a diversity of jobs in their lives, that is the time when you really have to equip them with the critical-thinking skills, initiative, ability to reason and that kind of thing which will serve them well whatever they end up doing.

Also at a general level, we think it is really important to integrate theoretical and practical education for everybody. We do not think the more hands-on stuff should be for the lower-stream kids and the more theoretical stuff for everyone else. We do think there is a role for practical experience in everyone's education. We are quite supportive of co-op education programs for everyone who wants them.

The meeting I attended at the Wellington county board yesterday was to talk about a proposal it has developed to integrate apprenticeship training into its secondary school curriculum, whereby students would complete grades 9 and 10 and then would enter a program where over the next three years they would complete the requirements for their secondary school diploma, as well as do the first three years of an apprenticeship. That is a model that has some real dangers and concerns, depending on how it is developed, but also has some real potential. That can be done under the current arrangement, and extending the school year is certainly not a necessity for that.

Finally, with regard to the observations about apprenticeship, I guess I would give a contrary view as to what is happening with respect to apprenticeships. They are really quite diverse. In many skilled trades, what has been most notable over the last 20 years has been the deskilling of those trades. New technologies have been developed that mean the person doing that trade needs less skill than he formerly needed. In fact, the technologies have been developed precisely for the reason that employers will not be so dependent on what they fear will be an inadequate supply of skilled tradespeople.

Whether one looks at electrical trades or machinist trades or a variety of others, what I find remarkable is the extent to which they have been deskilled. There are other trades where that is not the case; I mean, there is diversity. Then there are some that have always been pretty low-tech, such as cooks, hairdressers and others, which are apprenticeable trades as well. There is a lot of diversity, but I would think deskilling of the

trades is more remarkable than upskilling of them as a result of the new technologies that have been developed.

I am sorry, I said "finally," but I have one other comment with regard to para-apprentices. The apprenticeship model means that the worker being trained, unlike people being trained by other employers, works at a much lower wage. The tradeoff for that person is that he is acquiring papers, in a sense, a ticket–in fact, it is called a ticket–which allows him a reasonable level of earnings for the rest of his life if he is competent in that trade.

That kind of apprenticeship model, where one is sort of a partial employee and is paid at a much lower level, is not a model that we are keen on for other kinds of training. We feel there really is no need to use the apprenticeship model, which is fine for the kind of training it provides, for other training.

Mrs. Cunningham: I am very interested in your remarks, of course, and I think there is a lot of room for discussion, given that if one visits the secondary schools and asks the students why they are going to leave at the end of grade 10, they say it is because the education they are getting is not meaningful to them or they have not made the school team and they would like to be more involved socially.

I guess my question was aimed at whether those are prime years for educating students. I certainly agree with your remarks about their opportunities for formal education. I very much agree with that, but it is not working for those students. If they are not happy with that opportunity but they would be happy with less of the formal and more of the hands-on, I think we have to decide very quickly what we are going to do about that. That is why I was asking the question.

Dr. Turk: The problem, and it goes back to remarks we made when we were here previously, is that I think that is a complicated problem. The roots of the problem go back much earlier in the educational system. But the enormity of the problem is that you have kids dropping out of school because they find it more interesting to work at McDonald's.

I have not worked at a McDonald's; most of you, I take it, have not worked at a McDonald's. It is not the most exciting or challenging of workplaces. It seems to me one of the most damning comments on our educational system that a kid could find it more interesting to work at a McDonald's than to be at school.

Mrs. Cunningham: Other people have made that comment to you, have they? I have another view on that. First of all, I think it would be great fun to work at McDonald's with all your friends instead of studying, if that is what you felt like doing that year and the school curriculum was not meeting your needs. I think that is really what it is about. But they do not stay there very long.

Dr. Turk: No, because it is not very much fun to stay there.

Mrs. Cunningham: And it is not a lot of money and was never meant to be that. I guess my point is–and I will be talking, I can see this–that we need to work. We do not have time for pilots and two years of looking at this. There is enough information out there now. I know I visited seven colleges and they all have ideas on how they can work with the school systems and with the unions. I think it could be very much a local, autonomous thing with the colleges and the school boards in the area.

On your comment about earning money, I think it would be much more useful to students–and you can respond to this one–if they were out there in apprenticeship programs at an earlier age and taking their formal education. That is why I am looking at the school year thing. On the surface, I do not like it either, but some of them are only in school eight months, nine months or something.

Dr. Turk: First of all, apprenticeship affects such a small percentage of people as to be, in the larger view that you are dealing with, almost irrelevant. In the Wellington County Board of Education, for example, where they are setting up this program, they made the option available to 1,770 students; only 20 expressed an interest in pursuing it.

Mrs. Cunningham: Do you not think that is a problem if you have 900 waiting to get into programs in southwestern Ontario?

Dr. Turk: There is a great deal of variation as to how many are waiting to get in, where and in what trades. Part of the problem is that they have to have a workplace to get into. The virtue of an apprenticeship is not just an educational program; there is also the hands-on learning of it. So you have to have the workplaces that are prepared to support it.

Mrs. Cunningham: Perhaps we should change the model then.

Dr. Turk: No, on the contrary, it has been one of the most successful training models that has ever been developed. The strength of it is that it is a workplace program. The suggestion that it be

more educationally based–and some of the colleges are pushing that–I think would be disastrous for apprenticeship training. It is a model that has worked very well.

Mrs. Cunningham: They agree with you, by the way. They like the workplace model.

Dr. Turk: There is some diversity of views on that. Some colleges do; some colleges see more students, more time in colleges, as generating more revenue.

I do not think apprenticeship or that kind of training is really an answer to the more substantial problems, where you have some 80 per cent of basic-level students and some 60 per cent of general-level students dropping out. Apprenticeships could absorb such a small percentage of that, even if you made them available. That is not the answer. I think what we have to find is why it is kids are finding schools so unsuitable for their life interests and concerns. Those were matters we tried to address in the previous brief. I think they require quite substantial changes in the educational system starting in the early years.

Mr. Keyes: Time does not really permit me to get into the area I want, because it kind of follows along this theme. I think yesterday I accused a group of being ultra small-c conservative in their brief and not really taking a stance. You have obviously taken one, there is no doubt about it.

In here, you have tried to throw up some of the types of common things that you find would be difficult. I think it illustrates our stereotype of how we have been thinking for so many years. What I see we are starting on here is a very long process. It will be many years before we might get people seeing how the educational system might better serve the needs of society. I want us to think about it from the social side, and I do not quite think you have taken us far.

1050

You did look at some things. You have said, "Well, there are problems like maintenance." That has always been thrown up as an argument, which is a ridiculous one. I spent my lifetime in schools. Every other form of industry, business and commerce manages to maintain from the standpoint of housekeeping or maintenance. Everything else can do it, and yet they run 365 days a year and maybe 24-hour-a-day operations. There are lots of ways around that. There are very few schools today who do not use shift work situations for all of their maintenance, so it is there.

When you said you could not find the advantages to it, I think it again shows a bit of the fact that maybe you have not read as much of the research as people have given out. I think you would find that enlightening.

I want to look at it from this other point of view. If you were in charge, as a labour organization, could you still say that if you had your whole way of reorganizing society, you would keep everything the way it is from the standpoint of the way the factories operate and when you get your holidays? You have said that you actually, by survey, would say that the majority of all the unionized workers in our society get holidays from their plants in the summertime. You have suggested that, and I really wonder; if that is the case, I will accept it, but is that the way you think that most people would enjoy it?

I am looking at the social side, and if we go back and look at some of the recent works that have been written, if we have a look at George Thomson's Transitions, who are the poor in society and who must we help? We know who they are. If you read the new book Second Opinion, by Dr. Michael Rachlis, as to who gets sick in society, you will find how much these blend together.

I think what we have to look at is the school system–it would be better to say the school facility–and extending perhaps its day, extending the year. There is a great unused potential there to help work with those persons in our society who are not dealt with equitably, and that is what we put as a goal of education in our first report.

I have not got that time today, but I do hope we do get you back so we can talk more about the potential somewhere down the line to use the system much better for social equity.

Dr. Turk: If I could just make a brief comment: The labour movement, to my knowledge, has never been accused of advocating no change in anything in society.

Mr. Keyes: That is right, usually.

Dr. Turk: With regard to the reason that we are citing the kinds of things in this case, it is our view that extending the school day and/or the school year will do very little of educational significance. In fact, we have looked at the research. Looking at educational research is not unlike reading the Bible. One can find virtually whatever evidence one wants, given the number of people who do it. Then one has to sort out the quality of the research. But every group before you can, I am sure, defend its position based on some body of research that has been carried out in the field of education.

It is our clear sense that the very real problems that the educational system has to come to grips with will not be affected in any significant way by changes to the school day or school year.

Finally, with regard to the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged, it is our sense that the school system is not a significant player in changing their lot in life. The problem with people who are impoverished or homeless is that they do not have any money and they do not have homes, and letting them be in school longer is not going to change that. There has been a lot of experience with various programs in the school system to deal with social problems. I do not think they have been terribly successful.

What the school system can do is give all children the kind of education so that they have a better chance of getting jobs that will change their situation, but right now the problem is the lack of an adequate number of those kinds of jobs. We are working on that, but as we indicated in a previous brief, we think there are substantial changes that need to be made in the educational system that will give disadvantaged young people a better education, a better chance in life.

That is why our only comment about your timidity with regard to the streaming was mentioned again. It is not that we are just trying to flog the issue of streaming; we felt that that is one of those central changes that will in a dramatic way affect the lives of the people who are disadvantaged by society generally and that disadvantage is continued in the school system. We do not think the school day issue is one that has a big bearing on it. It is not that we are small-c conservative.

Mr. Keyes: Time is up. I think you are failing to see that what I am getting at is the utilization of the school facility, and I corrected to make sure I did not say the educational system but school facility. We want to talk about literacy as one of the greatest problems in our society. Where do you expect we could do a better job of improving the literacy rate in the country?

I think that even though it has failed to some extent, the school system is still where we should expect to find methods to improve the literacy rate, which is one of the major factors holding people back from the standpoint of better health, their working lives and living conditions. There is a lot related there.

I think that is what we have to look at: how we can use those facilities better. It might be by longer periods of time. That does not mean teachers and administrators of the facility as we know it today are the ones who are asked to put in longer hours and more days in the year. It is one I hope we will open up much more in this committee over the next week or two.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Turk, for giving us a very refreshing viewpoint and a lot of common sense. While it is true that probably nobody will live or die by what our committee report comes out with, at the same time, it can have major ramifications.

For instance, a number of people came forward in our last set of hearings and said that with a semester system in the current structure of the school year, it made it extremely difficult for students who had a two-week Christmas break and then had to come back for another couple of weeks in January to finish off a semester.

There are definitely changes that can be made to the school year which will have an effect on students, so it is certainly an area worth pursuing. We thank you very much for your comments today.

Dr. Turk: Thank you for having us.

Madam Chairman: Our next group this morning is the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Arlene, could you bring your group forward, please? Just begin by identifying yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard and begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Wright: I am Arlene Wright, and I am president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. This is an association that represents 90 public school boards in Ontario, and we have custody of 1.5 million students in the province. I have with me Carol Parker, who is a trustee with the Carleton Board of Education. Carol has chaired our committee.

I would like to give a brief explanation of our committee. It is our practice to invite all the public school boards in the province to send in submissions to us on their views on a topic. We then have a committee that does the groundwork on it and prepares the brief, so what we are presenting to you is an overview of the views of the public school boards in Ontario.

On the committee was Twyla Hendry, who is with the Waterloo County Board of Education, and Bob Whitehead of the North Shore Board of Education, with Wendy MacKenzie of the Simcoe County Board of Education as ex officio, Wendy being the chairman of our policy committee. Also with us is Marie Pierce, who is on staff as director of policy with the association.

It is our intention to read the brief into the record, and I hope we will have lots of time for dialoguing with you this morning. I think you will find our brief is very interesting in that we do offer some very concrete views on this particular topic.

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association represents the public school boards of this province providing open access to educational opportunities for all. We are pleased to appear before the select committee on education.

We recognize that the current length and organization of the school year and school day no longer need to be based on the traditional needs of an agrarian society. More flexibility may be required to accommodate differing lifestyles and the needs of the individual learner.

Before any changes in the current length and organization of the school day and school year are considered, however, an in-depth analysis of the issues involved and an assessment of the potential impact, both financial and educational, on the current educational system must be undertaken and the community consulted. Changes must not be made for political expediency.

1100

Mrs. Parker: Before discussing the length and organization of the school year, it must be recognized that community use of the public schools of Ontario is a widespread activity. School facilities are utilized not only for regular day school but for continuing-education evening programs, summer school programs and various community activities throughout the week and on weekends. Recognition of the community use of schools must be taken into account when considering altering the current school year.

Currently, provision is made for 185 instructional days within the school year. The way in which these instructional days are organized varies from board to board. However, a major organizational change has occurred in the past few years with the shift from the traditional year-long program to the semestered system. Even if no further changes are contemplated with regard to the length and organization of the current school year, this shift to the semester system necessitates a number of changes in the regulations.

1. Lack of congruence with college and university admission: Given the OSIS requirements regarding instructional time and the fact that, under the current semester system the semester cannot start until after Labour Day, the first semester does not end until the end of January with an extended break at Christmas and the second semester starts in February and runs until the end of June.

As a result of these time lines, there is an increasing problem for students graduating from the semester system with regard to admission to post-secondary education. While an increasing number of students are completing secondary school after the first semester, very few universities offer a February admission to the general arts program and there is no access to the specialized programs at the February entry point.

2. Teacher contracts: An additional problem that has been highlighted by the switch to the semester system concerns teacher contracts. Regulation 277, sections 6(a), (b) and (c) under the Education Act prescribes the dates and deadlines regarding termination of contracts. A contract can be terminated:

"6(a) at any time by mutual consent in writing by the teacher and the board; or

"(b) on the 31st day of December in any year of the teacher's employment by either party giving written notice to the other on or before the last preceding 30th day of November; or

"(c) on the 31st day of August in any year of the teacher's employment by either party giving written notice to the other on or before the last preceding 31st day of May."

A major problem has arisen for school boards with a semester system because section 6(b) of the regulation does not correspond with the end of the first semester. Either an amendment has to be made to the regulation to accommodate the semester system or the school year has to be reorganized to ensure that semesters end in December rather than at the end of January.

Before any changes are made to the current school year either in its length or organization, the educational and financial implications of such changes must be carefully examined.

There have been a number of arguments that the current school year should be lengthened. In many cases, the arguments are based on the assumption that the current school year has an inadequate number of instructional days to provide the quality of education that is required in today's society.

Instead of increasing the amount of instructional time by lengthening the school year, we would argue that what is needed is more flexibility for school boards to organize the current available time. There are a number of possibilities which can be considered when examining the organization of the school year, including the division of the current school year

into two equal semesters, the trimester system and the year-round school.

The school year could be divided into two equal semesters before and after the December break. The first semester could run from August to December and the second from mid-January to mid-June. This proposal would provide for two smooth-running uninterrupted terms and would focus on Christmas as the middle of the year. The secondary school term would fall in line with colleges and universities and would provide for those students fast-tracking to attend a college or university of their choice at the commencement of the second term, which is not now the case. In addition, high school students would finish their year earlier and be in a better position to obtain summer jobs.

This schedule could apply to elementary as well as secondary schools.

Consideration could be given to the feasibility of dividing the school year into three equal parts. This would allow for holiday breaks between trimesters, provide a greater number of entrance points for students, and maximize the use of existing facilities.

Operating schools on a year-round basis has been a favoured alternative in a number of American states. There are certain advantages to operating schools on a year-round basis. It alleviates overcrowding and reduces capital expenditure for new pupil places. Educational benefits include a more continuous flow of instruction throughout the year. The education of students is enhanced when there are shorter periods away from studies.

Parents in many cases are the principal beneficiaries of a reformed school year calendar because the long summer vacation of the current system creates major problems for child care arrangements.

However, there are also a number of disadvantages to year-round education that must be addressed. For example, there is the assumption that there will be a saving of capital costs with the year-round use of schools. There may be a short-term advantage, but these savings must be weighed against the increased maintenance and upgrading costs associated with the year-round use of the facilities. Increased utilization of present facilities would add to the wear and tear of both plant and equipment, with a corresponding increase in costs, yet there are virtually no funds available for the maintenance of present facilities.

There will be increased teacher and administrative costs, and there would be less time for renovations and major repairs, which usually occur during the downtime of the school year.

Rather than proposing major changes to the length of the school year, what is required is the flexibility for school boards to organize the current time available for instructional purposes, within some generally agreed-upon guidelines. For example, the opportunity to operate one or two year-round schools would give both students and staff multiple entry points. Further, in jurisdictions where capacities are underutilized, full-year usage may well be a more effective use of buildings.

We therefore recommend that the Ministry of Education change the regulations to allow for more flexibility in organizing the current instructional school year. School boards should be given more autonomy to set the school calendar so that differences in locale and community aspirations can be addressed. Pilot projects should be undertaken to assess the impact of differing school year organizational strategies and the results should be shared among school boards.

In order to alleviate the short-term problems with the current school year organization based on the semester system, we further recommend that the Ministry of Education study the possibility of congruence between university, college and school calendars, and that the regulations provide time lines for the termination of teacher contracts that accommodate the current semester system.

In order to improve deployment of current staff resources and provide more flexibility for school boards, and in light of the current teacher shortage, one option that deserves more careful consideration is the current teacher work schedule. For example, teachers could be employed on a 12-month basis with Christmas, March break and a one-month vacation. The additional one month could be used for professional upgrading or summer school teaching at the discretion of the board. Therefore, summer school programs could be provided at no extra cost to the board and the board could use the freed-up finances for regional professional development programs for teachers.

Mrs. Wright: The length of the current school day is mandated by the regulations and provides very little flexibility for school boards. The regulations state that the school day shall consist of no less than five hours, shall not begin earlier than 8 a.m. nor end later than 5 p.m., except with the approval of the minister.

There is also no flexibility for school boards to schedule the lunch periods as the result of a unilateral change in the regulations in June 1988.

Without prior consultation with school boards, a change was made in regulation 262 concerning the lunch hour of teachers. Instead of the previous regulation stating that, "The lunch break for pupils and teachers shall not be less than 40 minutes," the regulation was changed to state, "A scheduled interval between classes for the lunch break for pupils and teachers shall not be less than 40 consecutive minutes."

I would like to state that in my own personal experience, that one word "consecutive" cost the Grey County Board of Education $78,000 between January and June of this year; that is, hiring people to come in and staff noonhour supervision programs.

The unilateral change has had major implications for school boards by removing an item that had been on the bargaining table in many areas and influencing a number of school programs, including lunch room and yard supervision, during the lunch break. Extracurricular programs were also affected, particularly in rural areas where these programs occurred during the lunch break as opposed to after school, due to busing arrangements.

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There are very few reasons to extend the current school day, and such an extension would be detrimental to a number of programs and activities.

While the school day extension would favour working parents by having the school provide a greater custodial service for their children, it would also, however, reduce the time available for extracurricular activities and job opportunities of secondary school students. The present school day facilitates the effective combination of study and part-time employment for many of our secondary students. Lengthening the school day will cause problems with this study-work combination.

A longer school day may have a negative effect on younger children, and it is questionable whether more time spent in school would result in any significant educational benefits.

A longer school day would have an effect on busing. In many areas, students are expected to be on the bus from as early as 7:30 a.m. to as late as 4:45 p.m. It would be unreasonable to expect students to be away from home for longer periods than is already necessary.

The community use of school facilities would be affected. At present, a number of community organizations and provincial and local government agencies offer services outside regular school hours to youth and adults. Lengthening the school day may well be detrimental to their operation because it would put us in competition for the same facilities and clients.

The solution to a crowded curriculum is not an extended school day but better utilization of the current instructional time through better teaching, more uninterrupted teaching and a more integrated curriculum. The hours spent taking a course should not be the only criterion for getting a credit. One possible way of ensuring less interrupted instructional time with the same teacher would be to extend the current school day to accommodate 40 minutes of preparation time for teachers before or after the instructional day.

School boards require more flexibility to work within the current instructional hours. Precise definitions regarding opening and closing times are best dealt with at the local school board level to accommodate the needs of the particular community and the characteristics of the students.

In addition to the question of extending the school day, there is the issue of defining the school day and possible inclusion of continuing education programs.

OPSBA does not support the extension of the school day to include continuing education programs. Such a change would increase the cost of providing these programs and school boards would be unable to afford them. Currently, continuing education teachers are employed on a third form of contract, and in most instances are not compensated at the same rate as day school teachers.

If the school day is lengthened to include continuing education programs and if teachers are employed on a full-time basis and assigned to teach at any time during the extended school day, then a corresponding change in the grant regulations should occur so that a student is a student for grant purposes, regardless of when that course is taken.

Mrs. Parker: Conclusions: Before any changes are made to either the length or organization of the current school year and school day, a careful examination must be undertaken of both the educational and financial implications of such changes. OPSBA believes that what is needed is more quality use of the current time, not more time. Rather than proposing major changes to the current length of the school year and school day, an alternative would be more flexibility for school boards to organize the

current time available within some generally agreed-upon guidelines.

Central to the issue of quality time for both the school day and the school year is the question of teacher training and education. The select committee needs to examine the whole teacher training process, teacher in-service, teacher upgrading and evaluation.

The current teacher training system needs to be reviewed. The selection process appears to favour undergraduate marks as the major criterion for admission to teacher training facilities. This assumes that academic background is the major characteristic of a successful teacher and that all other skills and characteristics can be taught in a one-year program.

School administrators need to be held responsible for the quality of education that occurs in their schools, but they are restricted without an effective teacher evaluation process. OPSBA therefore recommends that the Ministry of Education examine the establishment of an effective teacher evaluation system.

Any teacher evaluation program will not be effective, however, if school boards have no power to deal with teachers who are not performing up to professional standards. It is therefore recommended that the mandate of the newly established Ontario Council on Teacher Education be expanded to deal with issues of certification and decertification.

Mrs. Wright: In summary, then, we make the following recommendations and suggestions for further study concerning the length and organization of the school year and school day to the legislative select committee on education:

1. That the Ministry of Education change the regulations to allow more flexibility for school boards organizing the current instructional school year so that differences in locale and community aspirations can be addressed;

2. That pilot projects be undertaken to assess the impact of differing school year organizational strategies and that the results be shared among school boards;

3. That the Ministry of Education study the possibility of congruence between university, college and school calendars;

4. That the regulations provide time lines for the termination of teacher contracts which accommodate the current semester system;

5. That the regulation regarding the provision of an uninterrupted lunch hour for teachers be revoked;

6. That there be more flexibility regarding school opening and closing times;

7. That the current school day not be extended to include continuing education programs;

8. That the Ministry of Education examine the establishment of an effective teacher evaluation system; and

9. That the mandate of the newly established Ontario Council on Teacher Education be expanded to deal with issues of certification and decertification.

We have a couple of suggestions for further study:

1. That alternatives to the current teacher work schedule be examined, including the possibility that teachers be employed on a 12-month basis with Christmas, March break and a one-month vacation. The additional one month could be used for professional upgrading or summer school teaching, at the discretion of the board; and

2. That the possibility of lengthening the current school day to accommodate 40 minutes of preparation time for teachers before or after the instructional day be examined.

Thank you for your patience.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Arlene Wright and Carol Parker, for a very well-thought-out, comprehensive and, I would say, balanced brief, which had its moments that were controversial as well. I think you must have really set the cat among the pigeons, because we have quite a long speakers' list. We will start with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Madam Chairman. The last deputant said we should be timid. After hearing your brief, I think maybe we should be. You seemed to want to touch a number of matters that are traditionally under collective bargaining, at the moment, which would really stir up the teacher community, as I see it, and throw a huge fear into me in terms of such things as 12-month contracts, etc. This would–

Mr. Mahoney: He is almost speechless.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. It is dumfounding me. There is a great deal of timidity now coming into my voice.

I think what is useful about that, though, is that you are pointing out some of the implications in moving to changes in structure in a serious way, again, as others have done to us. There are major ramifications here for us to have a look at.

One of the things that jumps out at me is your suggestion–I think; tell me if I am wrong first–that under the present 185-day year school boards be given more local option in terms of being able to go to a few schools that are

year-round, other kinds of methodologies, changing the semester system to end at Christmas or whatever. You are suggesting that might be an alternative at this point, I think. Am I right?

Mrs. Wright: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Okay. Within our present structure.

I guess I want to throw out to you then the problem that might arise from this in certain metropolitan areas and other regions where people, for instance, in Scarborough, might opt for one kind of approach on this, East York for another and North York for another. We already have a bit of confusion over breaks around Easter and that kind of thing at the moment. It might cause some major disruptions within communities, because people work in different parts of communities with different kinds of breaks and that sort of thing. Can you just respond with any thought you have given to the problems that might ensue from having a major sort of opening up of local option in this way?

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Mrs. Wright: Sure. I would like to address two things. First of all, I would like to suggest that it was the government that sort of interfered with our negotiation process–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I gathered that.

Mrs. Wright: –when it took away our right to pupil-teacher ratio in the classroom. Then they also took away our right to negotiate noonhour supervision. So the interfering had begun before we started interfering.

With respect to your last question, Mr. Johnston, this is what we are asking for: flexibility for local communities. For instance, if the Metro area boards deemed it necessary to have a unilateral program in the sense that they got together and decided when their school year would start, let's not let that prevent or preclude a board in northern Ontario or rural Ontario from starting its school year, for instance, on August 1 and ending at the end of December. There is also the fact that we are in different tourism areas. Some areas have predominantly winter tourism and other areas have predominantly summer tourism. So the boards need the flexibility to deal with their own locales and communities.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I referred to that argument being made. I guess the North Shore Board of Education was an example of somebody who had gone to a different form of March break for its own purposes already.

What does this do to the other side of what you are suggesting, which is this problem we presently have with the semester system ending in January and most of the universities not being able to accommodate that January end for people who are fast-tracking? Does it not, in some sense, make an awful lot more common sense to have the semestering end at a specific time across the province that ties in specifically with the universities? Is that not contrary to what you are then suggesting in terms of a board, say in the north or wherever, being able to start in September rather than August or vice versa, because the semester obviously would end at different times in different parts of the province?

Mrs. Wright: Of course, not all boards are into semestering.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: About 70 per cent of the schools are semestered now.

Mrs. Wright: Yes. Again, the boards would have the flexibility to make that decision if they were in a semestered system. You have boards where some schools are semestered and some schools are on the traditional school year, so that the flexibility would be that the board could take a look at its own situation and decide, if it is a semestered system, that it would prefer the first of August to the end of December, to make it congruent with the universities. With other boards that are nonsemestered, that would not be a problem.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess I am wondering, if the boards are semestered, should they have the right to have their semesters at different times or should it be province-wide so it ties in with the universities, etc.?

Mrs. Wright: I am quite sure that if we could get congruent with the universities, most boards would follow that path.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: On continuing ed, I would have wished you maybe would have reversed your comments and advocated "a student is a student" funding and suggested that continuing ed be part of the school day rather than doing it in the reverse. Can you explain why?

Mrs. Wright: In order to do that, we have to say "a teacher is a teacher."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes.

Mrs. Wright: And we are not being funded as "a teacher is a teacher."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, I agree. But if you take the position that you are funding for the students, an adult student as a mandatory student, then you would be able to pay the teachers in that fashion.

Mrs. Wright: That would follow along.

Mrs. Parker: That would follow along.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are you saying that because it is not the situation at the moment, you are reluctant to see continuing ed just thrown in at the moment, rather than saying you are opposed to continuing ed being in if the funding is appropriate?

Mrs. Parker: That is right. Do not do one without the other.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess I was looking for a more positive statement about the role of continuing ed within the present system, if it is appropriately funded.

Mrs. Parker: I think our comment is with regard to "if" and no more specific than that at the moment. That was the reaction with regard to the boards. They have not gone any further than that right now.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No doubt.

Mr. Mahoney: It is a delight to be on this committee with all these ex-teachers who were shuddering as you made your pronouncements and who are stumbling for words. I am not an ex-teacher.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am not an ex-teacher; but I am stumbling anyway.

Mr. Mahoney: It is a joy. I was a little curious, though, in all fairness, that much of your brief did really concentrate on the teacher community in the sense of, without coming out and saying it, improving methods to evaluate, methods to train, having them work an extra 40 minutes in preparation time either before or after the end of the normal school day, when I am sure the automatic argument from most teachers would be that they do that already. To be in a position to be properly prepared to deal with a classroom or a number of classrooms of young people on a daily basis, it seems fair to think you would have to prepare, certainly before the school day or at the end of it for the next day; and likely in excess of 40 minutes I would also think, to be an effective teacher.

With regard to the issue before us, which is really reorganizing the school calendar on either a daily basis or an annual basis, is it really fair to simply say leave the school calendar alone and reorganize the teachers' time and responsibilities in the system and that will, frankly, from your brief, be the panacea to solving our problems here?

Mrs. Wright: We are talking about an instructional day. There is your school day and your instructional day. The life in a school day may start as early as 7:30 in the morning if they are operating a day care program and go through till 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock at night if that school is open for community activities. We are talking about an instructional day which is mandated by the Education Act, so many hours a day. When we are looking at instructional time for teachers, 40 minutes a day is 200 minutes in preparation time; and that, right now, is being taken away from the instructional time of a teacher.

Mr. Mahoney: But that does not answer the fact that the teachers would indeed–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There could be a strike about this.

Mr. Mahoney: Strike? Are you kidding? I think the term "wildcat" would need to be redefined.

In all fairness I recognize, as Mr. Johnston has said, that much of this is usually discussed at the bargaining table, as to whether it is part of their regular, instructional, start-to-finish of a day, but clearly they would have to be working on preparation at times other than 8:30 to 3:30.

Mrs. Wright: I think the part that we mentioned, the instructional day, was to give children more attention from a particular teacher.

I would just give a short answer to the other question. When you look in rural communities, where the majority of the children are bused in, and you talk about the length of time they are on the bus, if there are any extracurricular activities to take place at all these have to take place in the noon hour.

As it stands now we must give our teachers 40 consecutive minutes. Unless we extend the noon hour to 80 minutes so that there are 40 consecutive minutes for a teacher to be off and another teacher to be on and then we have the extracurricular activities, we need the flexibility which we do not now have to extend that school day, if in fact that is the route a board would like to go.

Mr. Mahoney: You went into another point that I wanted to make, and that is the fairness of an uninterrupted lunch hour or 40-minute period. It seems to me not to be unreasonable to allow someone who is in a working environment that I think people recognize has a certain amount of stress to it during the day to have 40 uninterrupted minutes to eat his sandwich, for goodness' sake. I find it really a somewhat radical position to suggest that they not have that. I would hope the solution to that problem is one of organization

at the administrative level of the individual school.

I would also comment that at a time when we are all, I am sure, being lobbied by our various school boards about one of the very serious problems, that is the shortage of teachers, to look at resolving the administrative difficulties of the organization of the year or the day by revisions to the status of teachers would probably be counter-productive.

1130

I have a question about local autonomy. I am delighted to hear members opposite, particularly from the Conservative Party, espousing local autonomy and local option as the solution to a number of our problems. I think it is common sense.

Mrs. Cunningham: Did I say that?

Mr. Mahoney: Certainly I heard it from that direction. It was a female voice, so I am assuming it came from Mrs. Cunningham. I certainly agree with that. I think it is wonderful.

But what about the difficulties of having school boards all over the map on the matter of hours, so to speak, or perhaps having mixed timetables within a school board? How do you resolve that as representatives of the school boards? Do you feel there could be either a comfortable position, a compromise position or something that you could work out together?

Mrs. Wright: I believe it is something that could be worked out together with the communities.

Mr. Mahoney: You talk about pilot projects. There was one group yesterday that suggested–I do not know if they meant it when the smoke cleared on the issue, but they talked about selected schools having certain changes within the structure of the school year. Would you see it necessarily having to be broader and having each school board make its own decision?

Mrs. Parker: I think that school boards could work that out very well. If they wish to have one school that is totally flexible within their system, that would be something they would have to work out with the community. I do not think it needs to be total disorganization if that happens, if that is the way they feel it would work best.

I would like to touch on the comment on pilot projects because what we were concerned about is that if this does happen, if school boards are given more autonomy and more flexibility with this particular issue, then any results from their experiments, if you like, should come back and be made public to other school boards so that we can find out what happens if they decide to go ahead and do this; how it affected the community, whether in fact it worked or whether it did not work and so on. That was the reason behind that comment.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mahoney, we have four speakers left: Mrs. Cunningham, Mrs. O'Neill, Mr. Beer and Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. Mahoney: I will accept your admonition and pass.

Madam Chairman: Never an admonition. Your questions were very much to the point, but since we do have four speakers left–

Mr. Mahoney: I am cut off.

Madam Chairman: Yes; the bad news is that we are cutting you off, anyway. I would just say to the four remaining speakers that if they could tend to be fairly short with their questions that would be much appreciated.

Mrs. Cunningham: I will try.

I really like Mr. Mahoney but you have to know there is a political bias here. Actually, the underlying issue around local autonomy has a whole lot to do with page 5 of the brief, where you talk about "without prior consultation with school boards." That is the issue, not so much local autonomy. You have to consult so you know what the implications will be. There are lots of teachers right now who take five-minute and 10-minute lunches no matter what the regulation is because that is the way they operate, just as some of us do. So that is the issue.

First of all, thank you for your brief. I am having fun. I really do like Mr. Mahoney. We have a good time. This is part of the fun of being on a committee such as this from time to time. As long as they vote the way I want them to in the end we have even more fun, if you know what I mean.

I really appreciate this brief. I do not think there is a lot of this brief that is negotiable. These are regulations of the province of Ontario. Although these kinds of things were discussed at bargaining tables, most of them are already decided by the laws of the land. One of them happens to be a labour law, not an education law, so there are only a couple there that would even appear on a bargaining table because other laws get in the way of making any changes. I do not think there is a lot here to do with negotiations at all.

I am interested in some comments around curriculum because I think that when we are talking about the school year, it would be very nice if we only had to worry about facilities. We

know it is a tremendous challenge right now, but I think the students are the ones we should be most concerned about: What are we teaching them and how best to do it? Therefore, I have asked questions of other groups around something I think is of real concern for Ontario and that is in the area of skills development.

I am quite proud, as a former school board trustee–actually, just a year ago I still was a school board trustee and I miss it–that we were moving in a direction of co-operative education and we were moving in a direction of training students. I certainly believe in a balance; the former presenter made me aware of his concerns around the right to a formal education, English and math or whatever; that is important, but the skills also are a part.

Are there more programs you are aware of in the province right now that could be considered for the summers or for an extension of the school day? There must be a better way of providing the opportunities in the workplace, whether they be in unionized workplaces or others, than what we are doing now for students. I am talking about training them for what they want to do and I am talking about keeping them in school for a longer period of time. Are there other things happening than just that Wellington project that was referred to this morning, and do we get co-operation?

Mrs. Wright: I am disappointed that the former presenter has not stayed, because I would have liked to talk to him and I would have liked to say to him that there are many boards in Ontario, in fact most boards, involved in a co-operative education program and in a linkage program with industry. There are extremely good programs whereby industry and schools are twinning and are sharing resources and expertise through the co-op education program.

In fact, if a student is getting a basic education for half the day and then going out into industry for the other half of the day, that time does not stop at 3:05 p.m. or when the bell rings at school; that student very often continues at his placement until such time as the workday is over. They are continuing, even though they are not continuing in the eyes of the school; that is the choice of the student and the industry in their placement program.

The programs are really very excellent. We are getting more and more into the technical aspect and more boards are getting involved in an apprenticeship program, but again there is a shortage of technical teachers. We have that to deal with as well as extending the day to accommodate these kinds of programs. I am very sure that if boards had the flexibility of a two-semester or a trimester system wherein they wanted to work in co-operation for skills development, this is something they would take a very good look at.

Mrs. Cunningham: On the availability of teachers, I was interested in your recommendation 9. In that regard, just something to leave with you: First, I am aware there are only 130 persons registered in colleges across the province for technical education, and if the boards were clever they would have hired them the first day they entered the course. The most we have ever had, I think, is something like 170, but we are going down in training. Also, the one credit in OSIS certainly does not give the message that we are interested in technical education in this province.

There is another point I would like to make. Have you thought at all on recommendation 9 about the requirement of young people who are going into teaching being interviewed to get into the schools of education? Is that anything you have thought about? I think it is absolutely shocking that we would give someone a 20-minute interview or even an hour interview for almost any job, but we do not interview them to go into teachers' colleges.

Mrs. Parker: One of the concerns that came up in the discussions of this committee was that having a degree does not necessarily make a teacher, and this is an issue that needs to be looked at. We felt very strongly that it does need to be looked at. Teachers are no longer teaching because it is a vocation, as it used to be. It is no longer seen as a vocation. Maybe it should not be, but we did feel there should be some method of dealing with this issue. That came forward very strongly in the committee, that something should be done about that and it should be looked at further.

1140

Mrs. Cunningham: There was a time, when we were short of teachers in this province, when teachers took their training in summers as well. Is that something you have been talking about?

Mrs. Wright: In our brief presentation to the ministry on teacher education, we stressed that academic standing should not be the only criterion to get into the faculty of education, that there has to be a want to be a teacher and a love of being a teacher. We also must look at specialization. For instance, if we are not getting enough science teachers, we have to look at increasing the number of places open to students with

particular interests, and that would include the technical trades. We did stress that, and I believe it has been addressed somewhat in the ministry's remarks.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think for the record we should correct a statement that was made that faculties of education do not hold interviews. I would suggest that is more the exception than the rule, in my experience. I do think there are three or four of the faculties that are doing very innovative things with school boards as well that involve a much longer, if you want to call it that, apprenticeship. I really do think that although things are slow, there certainly are much more than just academics in most of these institutions. Maybe it is pressure from groups such as ourselves and trustees, but there is some movement.

On your point 8, on the evaluation of teachers, I do not know how that fits into a brief on the length and organization of the school day and the school year. I wonder if you could help me fit that in, whether you just threw it in because of the teacher review being out there or whether it actually has a bearing on what we are studying at this moment. You obviously feel now that the superintendent's role, which is the main teacher evaluation scheme, is not sufficient. What is your actual point on number 8?

Mrs. Parker: I think the concern started with the comment that–it is among the conclusions on page 7 of the document–what is needed is more quality use of the current time. It followed from a discussion that came out of that. I do not think it is a criticism necessarily; it is a comment that there is not an effective teacher evaluation system at the moment; and there really is not. It has to do with the point you brought up about interviews, if I can just go back to that for a minute. I do not think an interview is necessarily a way of weeding out someone who is not going to be a good teacher.

Mrs. O'Neill: Surely it is one way.

Mrs. Parker: It is one way, yes, but it is not necessarily the only way; neither are academic marks. It is perhaps one way, but neither of those should be the only criterion used. I think there is a general concern that the whole system appears to be ineffective.

We are having people who are not particularly good teachers, who should not perhaps be teaching–maybe they should be doing something else–but there is no real evaluation of them. That is how that came up. It came out of a discussion on the issue of quality time: what is quality time, what is quality teaching? You are adding bits and pieces to the curriculum all the time at the ministry level. Perhaps all these things should be integrated, and it takes a good teacher to be able to do that. Again, as I say, it came out of that discussion.

Mrs. O'Neill: This is a very strong statement and your statements to substantiate it are very strong. They certainly point at the present structure of the role of the principal and the role of the superintendent in teacher evaluation. They concern me. I presume you will take them to the Ontario Council for Teacher Education and maybe to the advisory committee on evaluation, because they point at a very fundamental part of the structures.

Then what do we do about evaluating principals and superintendents? That is my next point. In my humble opinion, the on-site evaluation has a lot going for it and to uproot that for some other superimposed kind of evaluation would be quite worrisome to me. Anyway, it obviously is not the main point of your brief.

You said quite a bit about the lunch hour. Is there anything else you want to say? I did not realize that that regulation would cause such an uproar.

Mrs. Parker: It cost a lot of money.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is it just the money? I know that "just money" for school boards is–or is it much more?

Mrs. Wright: What has happened is–first of all it was just done. Through the Ontario School Trustees' Council we asked the minister, and through him the deputy minister, and they could not seem to give us an answer as to how that got into the regulation. I am still waiting for that answer. The decision was handed to boards in July. Of course, you realize that boards do not meet in about the four middle weeks of the summer, and it was very difficult for boards to organize to accommodate that legislation in September.

A number of boards went along with an organization of the principals, trying to put in so many minutes of preparation time and 40 consecutive minutes of lunch-hour time. With a rural school, where buses are leaving because you have connecting buses and your bus schedule is already set up, it was very difficult to manoeuvre that to fall within the school day.

To try to hire outside people in a rural community to come in to look after children for a noon hour, which may be 50 minutes or 60 minutes long, and have no other duties, is not an easy task. It is difficult to find someone who is willing to come to the school and give an hour.

You are looking at $10 or $11 an hour, plus whatever else you happen to incur in expenses. It was a real organizational problem for school boards.

Basically, there are boards in the province that do hire outside supervision for recesses and for noon hours, but for boards that were not prepared, just to have this unilaterally dumped on them at that particular time has posed a real problem. I must add that it has only been with the co-operation of the federations and the boards that we have been able to work something out.

Mrs. O'Neill: Mrs. Wright, may I ask you, would the majority of the boards you represent have had all this rather detrimental result?

Mrs. Wright: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: It would be the majority?

Mrs. Parker: There certainly was a comment from most of the boards.

Mrs. O'Neill: Because most of them had not written that into their collective agreements at that point is what you are saying. Okay, thank you.

Mr. Beer: I too found your brief very interesting. I would like to go back to the question of the school year and a couple of points that Dianne Cunningham made earlier.

When we look at the question of the school year, and I think generally speaking in terms of the school day there are a lot of reasons–busing is certainly one and there are others that complicate that question–but in looking at the way we set up the school year, if we think–and this is anecdotal, but it is none the less a large part of a legislator's experience.

When we go into the schools for the sorts of visits that we do and we try to talk to the students who are there–and we try to talk particularly to students who are not there, you know; to find them and say, "Why did you drop out?" and get some sense of that; clearly there is a message out there.

Maybe we are not always reading it correctly, but something is not working if we have all of these kids dropping out. Maybe some of them are coming back later, that is true, but none the less there are a lot who are just disappearing and getting lost.

I guess I approach the school year issue then as, if we can make some changes is that going to enable us better to do things that will keep those students in the system longer? Are there things that can be done? It does not necessarily mean at all that the students are there more than the 185 days; I think it is perhaps a question of structure.

1150

I want to be clear that what you are saying is that–and this really is the provincial level–if the provincial government could make changes to certain rules of procedure–regulations, the act, whatever–then school boards could begin, in effect, to address some of those things without necessarily getting into major pronouncements and shifting government policy, but simply providing that flexibility to perhaps, in the early stages, make relatively minor changes. When I say "minor," I mean in the sense of being able to go from mid-August or late August, to make that sort of change. Then ultimately, in some cases, some boards might develop a program similar to the California and Utah models that we have looked at.

Is that what you are really saying here, that this is perhaps not as big a deal in trying to make some changes but that there are some fairly simple things which the province could do which would then allow us to move forward in some of these areas?

Mrs. Parker: That certainly is something that could be used by the boards that felt they had a number of students who needed that flexibility. I am not sure it is the answer to the dropout problem. I also have a feeling that is a quotation that is used quite often as a reason for getting at the education system, because I am not sure the numbers are nearly as great as they are made to seem.

I think boards certainly could use that flexibility within their own systems if they so wished to provide the sort of programs that might be more flexible for those students who felt they needed that flexibility. I do not think it is necessarily an answer, but that is what we are asking for, the flexibility rather than the lengthening.

The date you mentioned, mid-August or late August, is more a comment to do with the semester system than it is to do with a specific reorganization.

Mr. Beer: Presumably if you were trying to develop a trimester system you would be looking at some convenient ending times, as you mentioned, which would facilitate matters if you could start–

Mrs. Parker: From the reactions that we have from our member boards, there really was not any great feeling of need for any board to put in a trimester system or a 12-month school or anything like that. What they did ask for was flexibility.

We have such a mixed society. Although we state at the beginning of this brief that there is no

longer any need to have the school day and school year based on the traditional needs of an agrarian society, there are still some areas that would like to do that.

We are asking that they be given the flexibility to be able to organize their school year so that maybe most of their students could be out on the farms in the summer. A lot of the others would want to be able to connect up their school lives with the working world and not get out of school after the university and college students have got all the jobs.

That is something that should be thought about. We do not have that flexibility right now. But as I say, I do not remember any of the reactions to our questions indicating that they want a trimester system or a 12-month school year.

Mr. Beer: Thank you. In the interest of an uninterrupted 40-minute lunch period, I will let Mr. Villeneuve have a turn.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Villeneuve, for a final question.

Mr. Villeneuve: Thank you, ladies, and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, for a very honest brief and one that has generated a lot of interest.

Recommendation 8 was touched on by my colleague across the way, Mrs. O'Neill, in regard to an effective teacher evaluation system. That is a pretty strong statement. Have you noticed that it is even more difficult with the shortage of teachers now? Just elaborate on that for us a little bit, please.

Mrs. Wright: Because this has evoked a great deal of interest, if you do not mind, I am going to ask our staff person, Marie, to come forward and really give a proper answer to this particular question.

Ms. Pierce: I am Marie Pierce, director of policy.

I would not presume that a proper answer has not already been given, but we focused on the emphasis on the teacher evaluation system because of our concerns with regard to the quality of education. Even though it has been mentioned that you do not see how it relates to the length and organization of the school day, a lot of people say children will be educated better if you give them more time and extend the school day or extend the school year.

Our concern was that perhaps looking at more time is not necessarily the issue. Looking at better use of the current time and better quality education is the issue. That is why the focus was on teacher evaluation and trying to get at an effective way to find out which teachers are effective and which teachers are making better use of the time that is currently available.

I know the ministry has been looking at different ways of evaluating teachers. It is a very complicated process and very difficult to come up with a way of assessing whether teachers are effective. I think what we are trying to stress is that there has to be more research and study into the most effective way of looking at teachers and how they can use the quality time to ensure that the students do get the basic education we require. I think that is the major point we were trying to make with regard to looking at teacher evaluation.

Mr. Villeneuve: Pertaining to the public school boards, do you foresee the shortage of teachers as being something that is artificial? Is it going to correct itself or should there be government involvement here to make sure it corrects itself with the type of individuals we need in this very important profession?

Mrs. Wright: There has been a survey done in the major corridor and it is our understanding that they are going to require 4,000 teachers in the major Metro corridor in September 1989. There definitely is a shortage of teachers. Boards in Ontario are hiring a great many teachers from outside the province. They are even going across the ocean to hire teachers for Ontario. There are shortages in specific courses: the sciences, the technology trades, French. We are in a real crisis situation with respect to teachers.

Recently we met with ministry people, with the deans of colleges and universities, and I would like to state that we approached them on the criterion for admittance to the faculty. Again, they tell us they are understaffed and they are having a great deal of difficulty in looking at admittances, but it is improving. When they explained their system to us, we were very pleased to hear that.

From what the ministry is saying, I believe there is going to be some solution to this crisis by 1990, 1991, 1992, but what do we do in the meantime? The student population in the province is increasing, not decreasing. With the fact that each year we have the pupil-teacher ratio lowering in our primary classes, again boards have to hire because of legislation. It is a serious crisis.

Mr. Villeneuve: Certainly decisions by this committee, should it see fit to recommend a lengthening of the school year, would compound that problem, because quite obviously more

teachers would be required within the system which is already in rather short supply.

I would like, at some other time possibly, suggestions from your group about how the government of Ontario could help to alleviate in the short run this rather serious situation.

Ms. Pierce: I think we also have to stress that the current teacher shortage highlights the problem of making sure we do have an effective teacher evaluation system. In the shortage period, no one wants to have teachers who are not qualified to teach our children in the schools. It becomes even more important that an effective evaluation system be developed to ensure that the teachers are the best teachers for the students, even in a shortage situation.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank our delegation for a very interesting and provocative brief today.

Mrs. Wright: If I might make just a couple of closing remarks, I think what we are really asking is that you take a serious look at the Education Act. It needs a complete overhaul. There have been some piecemeal changes or amendments to the act, but they do not seem to be good enough. I think that, maybe through this committee, you can take a good, serious look at an overhaul of the Education Act.

With the crowded curriculum we are facing and with additional curriculum such as drug education, acquired immune deficiency syndrome education, heritage language programs, boards are finding themselves in a really crushing situation with respect to the compressed school day. If we could suggest you have a look at that act, perhaps with a view to overhauling it, we would certainly appreciate it.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for that suggestion. We might be able to do something like that and still remain fairly timid as far as your other recommendations are concerned.

Mrs. Wright: I know this committee is going to look at other issues and other topics. In the interest of getting all the information we can from our public school boards across the province, we would appreciate if we could know in advance what the topics are going to be and when the hearings are going to be so we can be well prepared.

Madam Chairman: Unfortunately, as a select committee, one of the detriments we have is that we can only sit when the House is not in session. As you saw earlier, we cannot always predict when that is going to happen. We will try to give you as much advance notice as possible of our next mandate and we will certainly try to keep in mind that the summertime is a very inactive time for boards and teachers and try to accommodate you as much as we can. We are acting within certain restrictions, but we will do our best.

The next sitting of the committee starts at 2 o'clock, and I intend to start at two o'clock sharp in view of the very extensive schedule.

The committee recessed at 12:01 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:06 p.m. in room 151.

Madam Chairman: I would like to welcome you to this afternoon's session of the select committee on education, as we continue to look at the length and organization of the school day and the school year. Our first delegation this afternoon will be the Ontario Teachers' Federation. Please come forward. It is nice to have you back with us.

Mr. Albert: Thank you. It must be the March break here, too.

Madam Chairman: No, the members are all out in the hallway, actually. They do not really believe me when I say we are going to start at two o'clock. Anyway, Mr. Albert and Mrs. Wilson, please identify yourselves for the record and then begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr. Albert: I am Rod Albert, president of the Ontario Teachers' Federation this year. Margaret Wilson is the secretary-treasurer of the Ontario Teachers' Federation, now and for ever.

Mr. Mahoney: Like some members of the Legislature.

Madam Chairman: It sounds like you are threatening her—whether she wants to be or not.

Mr. Albert: It is a life sentence, yes.

The brief has been shared with the members of the select committee. We would like to focus perhaps for five minutes on our appendix, which is a response to the committee's first 23 recommendations. By and large, I think you will be pleased with our support and acceptance of those recommendations.

If you turn, therefore, to the last few pages of the brief, we certainly concur with recommendation 23, as you see in our initial paragraph. Like you, we know that being involved in redistribution of resources is a difficult priority, but budgets are the reflection of government's real priorities. So, to understand sufficient resources, I suppose we need to work on that recommendation.

You will see in our main brief that we come back to the point again that perhaps one of the things that would be timely in education would be a review of what is needed, when, how it can be implemented and the shift in resources that would be necessitated by it.

The point OTF made to the select committee earlier in the year had to do with the direct involvement of the education community from the point of view of teachers. Again, we would simply caution you that educators, the classroom teachers, the implementers of suggested changes need to be involved. If they do not feel they are involved in a meaningful way, I guess I would be concerned that while we may have paper changes we may not have effective change in the classroom.

Again at the bottom of the first page of the appendix, we point out, again with some disappointment, that there were no specific recommendations on the issue of francophone education.

Then when you get to page 2, and let me highlight it for you, there is much to approve in your report. We recognize the herculean task you undertook, and we know yours is not an easy job.

We make specific references to your recommendations, and I will only highlight them. We certainly support the addition of goals related to the need to address the unequal position of women in contemporary society and a preamble that gives specific societal focus to the existing goals.

We express some caution on the generalist function of home room teachers. We point out that while the exchange you suggest between elementary and secondary schools can be very positive, we would again urge consultation and participation of the local teaching constituency, and we would urge a voluntary kind of exchange.

The achievement of realistic and effective student-counsellor ratios is a terrific articulation of a goal we support fully.

Turning the page, the Ontario Teachers' Federation is not opposed to diagnostic testing. We applaud those efforts. We would simply say that with regard to the structure the ministry currently has in place with the Provincial Advisory Committee on Evaluation, Policies and Practices, we continue to vet those kinds of initiatives through it.

OTF commends you for the encouragement of more Ontario research. I think that is really one of our dilemmas. We always look beyond our own borders at other educational systems. What has evolved there cannot necessarily be duplicated or replicated in Ontario. Perhaps before we burn bridges, we should undertake these kinds of

studies. You have several recommendations dealing with research.

On the Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions curriculum guidelines, we agree with you that we need to take a look at monitoring. I suppose the only problem in terms of the report from a process point of view is that your specific recommendations dealing with the sensitive issue of streaming perhaps jump ahead of some of the research that might take place. I would only say that perhaps recommendations 15 and 16, specifically, are too early. Perhaps that is what the research will support, but perhaps we should not push those recommendations so forcefully yet and should let the monitoring occur.

On the last page of the appendix, page 4, we certainly agree with recommendation 14. Again, we would simply say, please try to involve teacher organizations in these kinds of explorations.

Regarding the point about semestering, I do not know if the horse is out of the barn on this one or not, but we generally support your direction. I think community participation and involvement in making those kinds of decisions about programming course selection is important. There is a majority of semestered schools now. I think about two thirds of the province is semestered in our high schools, so I do not know that the recommendation will have that much practical ability on initiating semestering. It may be more valuable in the monitoring aspect that you suggest be undertaken.

Everyone applauds recommendation 23, I am sure. The only questions are what and how and when. Good luck on that.

Getting back to the topic I know you wish to hear from us on today, we have only a mild admonition that perhaps this would not have been the first topic we would have suggested to you at this stage of your deliberations. Certainly, the evolution of the school day and a look at and a reflection upon the present structuring of the school year, while worthy goals, may not have been the top-of-the-pile kind of priority we would have recommended to you.

We have suggested to you at the bottom of the first page some examples of issues that we hope the select committee will grapple with before you finish your deliberations; and certainly the emphasis is on analysis and development of curriculum and the provision of teacher in-service education. We pay a lot of lipservice to that; we always want to retool the education system and we never talk about how we upgrade and retool the deliverers of education in our province.

Certainly, with respect to the third point on the top of page 2, when I had my fling in Capreol as a teacher of English, I can remember often assigning to students an opportunity to develop a Utopian view of education. I always gave them the responsibility for being Minister of Education, and of course, budgets were never a problem. This was a Utopia, after all. They came forward with a number of conclusions that always delighted and inspired me to believe that no matter how good a system we think we have we can do better, and I know that is certainly what you are looking at.

The problem always comes back down to money. It comes back down to allocating limited resources. While this is not an easy topic, we do think that a look at the resources required and some kind of systematic evaluation and scheduling of how one might go about improving our educational system would be a much more practical issue for this committee to tackle than the length of the school day and school year.

We really begin our brief on page 2–I only have about 60 seconds left now–saying that as an organization we have no problem with the present school year and school day. I think it has evolved naturally over time. It has extended into night school; it has extended into summertime.

We certainly recognize that with the change in clientele, with more adults entering our schools, the regular 9 to 3:30 or 4 o'clock block of time for schooling is not totally appropriate. Certainly, there are parts of the province where schooling is going to the factory, and to industry and to business. I think that is probably an inevitablity as well. I think that kind of evolutionary change is fine and will continue, so we do not have any gripes about the present school year or school day. We would certainly urge no major changes.

We do not oppose those school boards, and there are some, now currently examining the alternative structures. North York comes to mind. But again, we simply urge some sensitivity in how teachers and the community are involved in those decisions to move to different structures. I know you have heard it from other groups, but even something as simple as school boards picking different March breaks tends to disrupt families and tends to throw students off in terms of their own social networks that exist out there beyond school boundaries.

I guess the urging of OTF is that change should not be revolutionary. We certainly have argued for some time that you need to look at pilot

projects. You need to evaluate them and determine if in fact what we are trying to do, which I think has improved the delivery of education for students, is really going to be the outcome of the change. I think that is said fairly clearly in our concluding paragraph, that our concern, as I am sure is yours, is for the quality of education rather than the quantity.

To that end, I suppose we can look at everything and anything under the sun. What has emerged in Ontario is based on an archaic tradition, some people might think, but I think it is a tradition that is generally accepted and on which families build their holidays and their plans for family gatherings and so on. I do not know whether a lot of tinkering will upset that kind of tradition or not.

At any rate, Margaret Wilson and I would be happy to answer any of your questions. We have tried to address your issue. We do commend you for your first 23 recommendations. I understand you are going to be reporting on this topic within a matter of hours, so we applaud the alacrity with which you are moving on this issue.

1420

Madam Chairman: I am not sure if we are ready to move quite that quickly, unless committee members have made a decision of which I am not aware at this time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Always the last to know, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Sometimes that is a saving grace.

Margaret, would you like to make any comment before we go to questions?

Mrs. Wilson: Just to concur, basically, with what Rod Albert has said; but let me say one thing about the school year issue itself. About eight years ago, the Ontario Teachers' Federation agreed to co-operate with the then Minister of Education in an investigation of the school year in Ontario. The minister then was Dr. Bette Stephenson. We were willing to look at different ways of packaging the time, but basically the whole event foundered on the tourist industry in this province, which rose up and said, "Don't touch July and August."

I think you should take quite seriously what Rod is saying about long-standing traditions around which people not only build their holidays but in fact in this province invest time and money. It is an area in which there is substantial economic investment. I think we were all surprised at the final outcome, because parents, teachers, and students were interested in different patterns, but there was a major industry in the province that was not.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for those comments. It was quite interesting to juxtapose the presentation this morning by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and your own comments. I think it is safe to say that one of the points you agreed on is that instead of looking at the quantity, we should be looking at the quality. I do not know if you have heard via the grapevine some of their recommendations from this morning, but I would be interested in having your comments on them.

Mr. Mahoney: Boy, you are a troublemaker today.

Madam Chairman: Yes, I am just dying to get a reaction because they are quite controversial. Did you hear about them?

Mr. Albert: We are here to be very diplomatic today and to address our brief. The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune of course follow us everywhere, but–

Mr. Mahoney: As they do us.

Mr. Albert: As they do you.

I do not know that it would really be very helpful to get into that. I am disappointed in what I understand was their presentation. I think it is easy to engage in teacher-bashing, but I am not sure that is very helpful, coming from that particular group. I do not think that is too outrageous a statement for OTF to make.

Madam Chairman: I think it is quite diplomatic.

Mrs. Wilson: If you have specific questions on the specifics, we would address them, but–

Madam Chairman: Oh, that is a lovely smile. You will be glad to know that Mr. Mahoney certainly, I think, defended the teachers' interests and said it might be counterproductive, at a time when we are looking at teacher shortages, to make the job significantly less attractive to people. It was quite an interesting proposal they had.

At any rate, I will open it up for questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is nice to see you both today. First, let me deal with your response to our first report. Many groups now have actually used this as a time to come back to us on our report. I think it is a good process. I had not really thought of that as part of what we should be doing in this time, but it is a good notion that this would be used as a time to come back and deal with our recommendations. I really appreciated that.

If we actually get around to making any substantive recommendations on the school year, maybe you could do that as we go to our next item, which will be financing, you will be pleased to know, as we have our hearings in September.

I have some doubts, though, whether the alacrity we showed in our first report will be followed in terms of coming up with a consensus on the school year in these next few days.

The other thing I would say is that I think it was probably a mistake of ours not to put in a specific recommendation about process. Within the wording of our first report there were many references to the fact of the participation of people intimately involved in the process from this stage on as we do the various parts of the review, whether we are talking about OSIS or whatever, but we did not put it in as a specific recommendation. I think that was more an oversight on our part, rather than deliberately done as we were trying to get those things done. We spent a lot of time, actually, in camera, talking about the importance of the process and involving teachers and parents in that process of change in the future. So I think that we were trying to respond; unfortunately, it only showed itself in the body of the report and not in the actual recommendations.

Let me ask you a couple of questions. You talk about a flexibility being there in the system, and I think we are seeing lots of signs of that at the moment. What about the question of semestering? Whether it is 66 per cent or 70 per cent of the high schools that are semestered, we have this strange anomaly of that first semester ending at the end of January, broken up by Christmas holidays and then a lot of exams in January after that break; and not fitting in with the university year in terms of grads out of the high school period and that sort of thing.

Has the Ontario Teachers' Federation thought at all about that whole matter, as we seem to have a very entrenched semester system now within the province? Is there, from your point of view, an argument for changing the dates of that to come before Christmas, or do you see a problem with this break over the Christmas period and the lack of connection with the university year or college year?

Mrs. Wilson: The connection with university and college does not worry me a great deal. I might equally say that since they take so few of our students they should change. But we have in the past, when the secondary education review project was active, looked at the question of semestering itself. It is worth remembering that as a result of the recommendations of that project, the schools sort of fell into semestering.

OSIS, in a funny sort of way, creates a four-and-a-half-year system, not a five, for many kids. I do not think we would be averse at all to looking at recommendations that shift that January date. Having said that, I do not think it is realistic to try to do away with the Christmas break, so you really have to look at other kinds of juggling.

The additional thing that one runs into is that, as Rod pointed out, you have to try to make things compatible for families as well. Families who have more than one child have children crossing the panels in elementary and secondary school for large parts of the children's lives. You have to be quite careful that as you are trying to address the needs of the university or a kid's entry to that or college, you do not create a school year for the secondary system that is incompatible with elementary children and therefore put families in a situation where it is difficult to find common time for holidays. It is not as simple a thing as it looks when one starts out to do a redesign.

Mr. Albert: My own comment on it, and I think I am fairly unique, is that I taught for two years in a school that was trimestered, eight or nine years in a semestered school and two years in a traditional school year. I think the advantages far outweigh any disadvantages that you might perceive from the outside. Certainly, students enjoy the semestering a lot more.

I think it comes down primarily to the 110 hours that is required for the credit. It is simply how you package that time frame. Students at the senior level, with that half year that Margaret is talking about, get a jump on the job market.

I agree with Margaret 100 per cent that what I find inflexible in terms of matching with universities and colleges is that those are all separate fiefdoms unto themselves and no one can ever persuade them of anything other than what they have always done. If there was an opportunity to bridge that difference, I think that would be useful, but students do not mind leaving and working for a few months and starting in a May semester, for instance, in the school system, if they want to.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This strikes me as strange, having a Christmas break just before the end of that semester. But I agree as well, Margaret, with your accounts about the other impacts, although I notice when we talk about this that we deal with high school kids and people

who have elementary school kids and the difficulties of accommodating that in the summer. But there are also people with preschool kids who have the whole day care thing which they then have to work around their holidays as well, so people have been making very complicated adjustments to our modern society.

What about pedagogical reasons for change? I think most people are saying that we really have to find some good reasons, other than straight organizational reasons, for this move. We have not heard an awful lot of real pedagogical rationale for a change in our present system at the moment; and not much, actually, in terms of why our present system works the way it does in terms of pedagogy; that seems to be more of a socially organized time frame as well.

1430

Are there things? We keep hearing from parents about overcrowded curriculum. Other things keep getting added in. People like me have expressed interest in seeing heritage language more mainstreamed and then people are saying, "We do not want to change the instructional day;" for pedagogical reasons there, I think, rather than straight organizational reasons. So one of the flexibilities might be a notion of moving the length of the school year marginally or changing the organization of it.

Has the Ontario Teachers' Federation done any looking at those kinds of pressures and whether the answers to those kinds of problems, the overcrowded curriculum and things, are in fact changing the structure of the day; or is it in fact reviewing the curriculum?

Mr. Albert: Let me start on that. I noticed one of your recommendations is to do research and analysis on semestering and how that impacts on the delivery of program and curriculum. Certainly when schools consider going to semestering, there is often an animated debate within the school, depending on the subject area, as to whether this will be a boon or the worst thing that has ever happened to education. You will find teachers split on their attitude about semestering.

If you are involved in teaching a sequential kind of subject, you do not want to lose as much as six or seven months of classroom opportunity to continue in that program, whether it is math or a language or whatever. So that adds an extra dimension of strain to students.

"Can you squeeze more into a semestered school?" is really the nub of the second part of your question. I think you have as much flexibility in a semestered arrangement as you do in the full year. I really think the problem is that we have overprescribed the compulsory courses, and that does not permit the flexibility that I think young people need and deserve.

Mrs. Wilson: The other comment I would make, and I agree basically with what Rod has said, is identification of where the debate occurs. In the secondary school it is a debate that pits languages, mathematics and music against subjects that are not quite rigidly cumulative and sequential. It is not only that it can be six months; indeed, it can be over a year away from a subject, depending on how the timetable is organized and how many kids are going to take it and so on. If there is an area for research, that is definitely one, because we do not have any proof that there are effects. People feel that there are effects.

In terms of the elementary panel, the question of time on task and whether it makes a difference or whether the curriculum has been overcrowded, it is always worth reminding ourselves that the average adult's attention span is a maximum of about 25 minutes on any particular topic.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We are highly trained.

Madam Chairman: We will last at least 30 minutes.

Mrs. Wilson: One always wonders about some of the period lengths that are designed for small children or for adolescents, or for adults if you are talking about the two-hour university lecture where you always slept through the second hour. This does not happen in all semestered schools, but some of the period lengths are, I would say, a little unusual in terms of the amount of time kids are expected to concentrate even on a variety of tasks all of which are similar.

In the elementary panel, if you are going to talk about length of day, reality is that by 3:30 p.m. or 4 p.m. a very large number of the kids physically are ready for a break. They have to have the chance to run around. They cannot be stuck at a desk or in a group or whatever kind of fancy situation you are going to design in a classroom that breaks them out of the rigidity of a classroom; because a classroom, regardless of how it is designed, is a somewhat rigid situation. So I do not see the length of day for elementary people changing significantly. I think it would be cruel and inhuman punishment.

But the curriculum itself is really loaded up with a number of topic areas that are much more closely related to social engineering, sociology and health, than what the schools used to be able to concentrate on teaching in the same number of hours. It is worth remembering that every time a new crisis arrives in society and the schools are

asked to deal with it in the curriculum, something else does get less time.

I am curious, for instance, about the Korean results in math; not about the number of days the kids are in school but about what they do during the school day. I think that is why we are addressing the question of quality rather than quantity. There are very serious questions that have to be addressed in relation to assuming that the schools can take on all new knowledge tasks because they happen to be the only common ground any more.

I think it is something you should be looking at. It would be very interesting if you looked at the timetables of kids and the timetables of teachers, not just in secondary but in the elementary panel, to see what they are trying to squeeze in.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: We again have a very extensive speaker list.

Mr. Mahoney: You will be delighted to know I can be brief since Mr. Johnston covered a couple of the points that I was interested in. It is getting scary, Richard. We are starting to think alike. I am going to have to rethink my entire position on these issues.

Madam Chairman: We know you can be brief. The question is, will you?

Mr. Mahoney: Just stay tuned and find out.

I have just a brief point on page 3 of your addendum, comment 5 regarding diagnostic testing. We had a criticism of that this morning from the Ontario Federation of Labour. I think I can paraphrase it, hopefully not putting words in Mr. Turk's mouth, but it is the concern of perhaps teachers teaching to the test, that general concept.

I just wonder how you react to that. Recognizing it is diagnostic and not for promotion, which I think was a very positive move, is there a threat, as a teacher within the teaching community, that some teachers may take that as perhaps an easy way out? I should also say I was defending you stalwartly this morning, so I am not attacking you this afternoon. I would just like to know, from a teacher's perspective, how you react to that criticism.

Mr. Albert: Again, I do not think there is a teacher in the province who is averse to using diagnostic tests. Diagnostic tests are the instruments by which teachers are able to evaluate a student's strengths and weaknesses and tailor an individualized program to help with specific weaknesses.

I think the danger comes in only if those kinds of test results are then used to do a sort within the class, the school, the school board. To me, that is the critical component where the danger may lie. Why are we using the test? Is it to improve the learning experience for the student, is it to assist the teacher to provide specific remediation, or is it being used to measure other things as well and, as I say, to rank students or whatever?

Certainly, as a teacher, I use diagnostic tests every year. At the beginning of every class and at the end of a semester I would give another test, a different test, simply to measure if learning had taken place.

Mr. Mahoney: Do you use that test, though, as a tool towards making your decision on grading of any type?

Mr. Albert: No. Personally, I did not. I used that strictly to assist the students in terms of their own weaknesses. I was a teacher of English, so it was reading, listening, writing and those kinds of skills. Obviously, they are very important.

Mrs. Wilson: Any instrument lends itself to misuse, but a good diagnostic test should not really be usable as a substitute for an achievement test. I would say that it is an area in which perhaps more in-service for teachers is necessary, because it is not an area that is really emphasized in faculties of education.

If there is misuse, the way to deal with that is to make sure the people understand the differences between the two instruments. I have not seen any massive misuse, but there can always be some.

Having said that, I think diagnostic tests are absolutely necessary, because if they are not available, then evaluation is far too subjective. They make a decent balance between the teacher's own reaction to dealing with the student and provide some sort of measure against which the teacher can say, "Am I misreading that kid?" as well as telling the teacher where the kid may very specifically need assistance.

1440

Mr. Mahoney: On the issue at hand, and briefly, Richard touched on the fact that we have had statements from people who have said there are studies that show that, for example, retention fades quickly in the first two or three weeks of a vacation break. We have had other people who have said exactly the opposite.

I look at this discussion and I recognize that you have stated there are perhaps more important things we should be dealing with, and we will deal with those, but in a sense there are two aspects to this issue. One is resource manage-

ment and the other is the quality of the education the child is getting, from my perspective.

Resource management is financing, whether we want to admit it or not at this stage of the game. We are not dealing with it in the detail perhaps that some would like at this stage, but clearly the management of our physical plants and our resources and our people is what the length of the school day and school year is really all about. In that context, I think it is important to discuss whether we can improve the management of our resources, both human and plant.

From the point of view specifically of the benefit to kids, though, which side of the argument would you buy into as to whether it would be more beneficial to have more shorter vacations or the present status quo?

Mr. Albert: Let me be somewhat of a devil's advocate. How much do you remember from your high school years, for instance?

Mr. Mahoney: Let's not get picky. I remember the good times.

Mr. Keyes: That was at least 70 per cent.

Mr. Albert: The learning curve is as you have portrayed it to us. You tend to retain things for a short period of time, much of it, and it diminishes over time. That is going to happen.

What is it that we do in our schools? I think we are teaching people how to learn, we are teaching them independence in learning, we are teaching them that an education cannot be denied to them, we are teaching them how to read and to write and numeracy skills, and we are teaching them attitudes and values.

To me, those things are lifelong. It is not like an inoculation; here you get your history inoculation and now you have it for life. It is cumulative. Some will slip and slide and others will retain it because of a personal interest and because they pursue it outside the classroom.

I am not sure that the whole education system can be held up on sort of an individual retention of learning. I think people retain the skills, the knowledge they need to, that they believe is relevant to continue to pursue a happy and full life.

Mrs. Wilson: Having said that, the North American summer break is long in relation to what exists in other counties. The number of school days in the school year is not radically different from the average in the industrialized countries. Having been burned once by offering to co-operate with Dr. Stephenson and looking seriously at the whole thing, I am baffled at how you get over what has become a very traditional break in July and August. It is very difficult.

I concur with much of what Rod is saying about teaching kids how to learn. Obviously, in some subject areas, you do want them to remember as well. The whole aim of teaching French is so that they will retain the vocabulary.

It is worth looking at these things, but as you pointed out the research will come down on whichever side you ask it to come down. Again, I cannot say with authority that this is what happens, because you look at two researchers and they will disagree. I think you come back to Ontario itself and whether or not you can sell something different.

Mr. Mahoney: Just as a closing comment, the alternative learning concept is one that I personally subscribe to. Kids can learn a lot when they are not in school and when they are working or doing other life experiences as well. What are you laughing about, Charles?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Gang learning.

Mr. Mahoney: Yes, gang learning.

Interjection.

Mr. Mahoney: Reference is the chief of police.

Madam Chairman: We have approximately five minutes left in the presentation time and in that time Mrs. Cunningham, Mr. Beer, Mr. Villeneuve and Mr. Miclash are going to ask very succinct questions. Sorry, we have no time for your answers. Win some, lose some.

Mrs. Cunningham: I very much appreciated your brief. I agree with your observation and I too wish we were looking at more fundamental issues. I think the three examples you have given us are extremely important examples, and I hope we can get on with this one. I feel as if I have been around too long some days.

This school year thing is not new. We have been through it, probably quite seriously three times in the last 15 years. At one time in my life I lived in a city where the whole municipality had an opportunity to vote, and that was in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Although the educators thought it was a good thing educationally and there was a great campaign going on, the public voted 97 per cent against it. They just wanted to have their family holidays together, and that is not unusual. I gave up that year and decided that it was a waste of time, that the public would always vote against it and let's get on with other things. I think it stuck with me.

However, I would like to ask your opinion on your comments on page 3. You are talking there

about some flexibility in the school year and I think this is happening. I am a little biased, being a former school board trustee from London, but we do have some secondary schools that are open year-round for program reasons. We have elementary schools that are open year-round. A couple of our special education schools this summer will be open year-round for this apprenticeship question that I have been rather interested in.

I like the example you have used with regard to the alternative approach such as co-operative education. You go on to talk about pilots. I said yesterday that I am just so fed up with the word "pilot." I just wonder how much time we spend on these things. They are going on all over. Teachers do not consider them pilots; they do them. They are part of their curriculum. They are innovative ideas and they do not like calling them pilots either.

Is there not enough going on, with what you know within your own group, that we could take some of the models that have already been developed and use them in other boards? I am now talking about some of the co-operative models and some of the alternative models for, even more important, working. Is that not what happens now?

Mr. Albert: I thought our paper did try to tell you in a very polite way, "Don't waste a lot of time on this topic." I think everything you have said is absolutely correct. We have the kind of flexibility in our systems now if we want to modify it. We certainly would not want you, though, to inflict holus-bolus a totally different school year or school day on the whole province. If people believe for sound educational reasons that there is value in a change or a modification, we are simply saying, "Let's test it and let's evaluate it before we do a provincial change."

Mrs. Cunningham: Could I be specific then. On the very first page, where you use your very first example of a fundamental issue, you are talking about the development of curricula and you are talking about student satisfaction and achievement. If we were to ask you now to provide to this government examples of curriculum development that may impact on the school year, maybe not right now but maybe in the future, as the teachers see it–I am talking about opportunities to achieve as well as working in the world of work, or whatever, to do with skills development.

Students in grades 9 and 10 who have talked to me in the last two weeks said: "We want to do more of this. We like it. We will come to school and we won't drop out." So I am getting at the satisfaction in achievement. Do you not think you could come up with maybe 20 examples in this province where teachers are doing that now, which could be passed on to other boards, where they have actually monitored them, evaluated them and changed them in the past five or 10 years? This is not new. Could you come up with them or could you not?

1450

Mr. Albert: I think 20 is absolutely a minimal number. One of the biggest problems anyone involved in innovative programming can share with you is that people feel they are inventing the wheel. Then they find out it has been invented in Wellington county, in Hastings, in Ottawa and so on. So you are absolutely right.

I think what we have not done as good a job of is somehow centralizing that information, that curriculum work, and sharing it. We tend to close our systems for some reason. Certainly, if there is anything you could do to facilitate more co-operation and more sharing of that, you would be surprised and startled at the number of things that exist today that could be shared in other parts of the province and probably implemented within a short length of time.

Teachers do not feel they have to invent the whatever wheel–semestering for English, innovative theatre and media courses, in every jurisdiction in this province. If there are two or three state-of-the-art programs and curriculum packages that exist, they will adapt them to their local needs.

Mrs. Cunningham: On semestering, my children and I do not agree on it. I am against it; they would never go back to the regular school year. So when I had to vote as a school board trustee after going to the 10 high schools–they were also my constituents–I had to vote for it. I do not think you would ever get the regular program back where semestering has taken place. In London, we only have two schools left. I think they will be gone this year, basically from public pressure on behalf of students. So be it. It matches the summer holidays, I think.

Mr. Albert: The summer holidays also provide a lot of income for students. You have had reports and statistics about the number of people in high schools who hold down part-time jobs. That figure certainly startled me. Those people find it necessary or personally fulfilling to have this kind of part-time employment. Summer is a peak season for them to hold down jobs.

I think you would be cutting into a part of their lifestyle and that might not be appreciated. You

might in fact find more people dropping out of school if you prolonged the school year. Again, I think students will have a say with their feet in terms of any changes we implement.

Mrs. Cunningham: They have now because we have not done these things, I think. Thank you so much.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Beer has graciously offered Mr. Miclash his time in view of our time constraints this afternoon, so we will go to Mr. Miclash and then to Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. Miclash: You mentioned earlier a three-semester system that you were involved in. Did I understand that correctly?

Mr. Albert: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Miclash: Could you maybe elaborate a little bit more on that. I am familiar with the two-semester system, but how would a three-semester system work in terms of time, class times and months?

Mr. Albert: The units were divided into approximately 13 weeks in what I call the sequential subjects, maths and sciences. Department heads and staff tended to simply restructure a full-year program into three parts, so you took grade 9 science, part 1, part 2 and part 3.

They essentially did not alter things very much. Those of us in the humanities who really tried essentially rolled over the students we had every 13 weeks. At that time, it was not semestered in the sense of just four modules. You had six classes coming through your door with 30 to 40 kids for 13 weeks. Then they were gone and you got another batch of six classes, 30 or 40 kids. It became a little too chaotic. Let me say that the experiment was a failure in the view of the teachers in the school. It was probably predicated on outside experience by the administration at that time. It was a pilot project and I think it went the way it deserved to go.

The students themselves did not find that there was a significant change because we had gone from a regular school year to trimestering. That school has now gravitated to semestering and I think everyone is very happy with semestering by comparison.

Mr. Miclash: Great; I had not heard of it before.

Mr. Villeneuve: Thank you very much for your brief. Your last paragraph, I think, says it all, that we should emphasize quality as opposed to quantity, but there is always a possibility that this committee would recommend that either the school year or the school day or both could be lengthened. In light of the fact that your profession is in a situation where your numbers are not quite sufficient to meet the demand, how do you think that would affect the teaching profession per se and those who have letters of permission to teach at present? How do you feel that affects quality, and how do you feel the pressures would be if we were to recommend stretching the day or the year?

Mrs. Wilson: That is something we will negotiate. If you want to extend the working day and the working hours, there are two ways to do it. Either the people who are there negotiate different conditions under which they will take on the extra work or they say, "Hire more teachers." The question right now is, where are you going to find the additional teachers if the answer of the present teaching force is, "We are having difficulty with the number of pupils and the number of hours we have right now"?

Mr. Villeneuve: Do you feel the letters of permission have affected in any way the quality of education that is presently delivered?

Mrs. Wilson: Yes. Letters of permission make a difference in two respects. In the first place, you have someone who understands a skill or a subject area but who has absolutely no training in either the methodology of delivery of the knowledge or skill, or in the assessment of pupils. That makes a difference. Letters of permission also make a great deal of difference to other teachers who are working with the teacher who has an LP, because they feel conscience-bound to assist that person and it does increase the strain on the schools all around. The number of LPs is very high right now, I understand. We do not have exact figures from the ministry, but they are much higher than last year.

Mr. Villeneuve: As a last question, can we correct that in the short run with things that could be done within the ministry to alleviate that?

Mrs. Wilson: I think one of the things you could do is to push the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to make more places available in the faculties of education next year. The number of new places they are making available is ridiculously low, given the shortage we know will exist.

Mr. Villeneuve: I think that is very important in the context of what we are discussing here. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Just one final question before you go: The Ontario Principals Association was our first presentation, if I am not mistaken. They recommended not necessarily lengthening the school year, but adjusting it.

This would certainly assist with the semestering problem. They were recommending, I think, that you go back to school in mid-August and then have your Christmas break, a two-week March break and finish up in mid-June. Basically, you are adjusting by three weeks the start of the school year, but you are making it up by the fact you leave two weeks early and have an extra week at March break. Does that appeal to you at all?

Mr. Albert: Think what that will do to the Canadian National Exhibition and Canada's Wonderland.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Hear, hear. It is worth while.

Mr. Mahoney: Think of the money it will save us.

Madam Chairman: That is right.

Mrs. Wilson: I am going to recommend that you go back and find the report that was done for Dr. Stephenson and take a look at the reactions she had to deal with. I am not saying that is an unrealistic vision of a school year. The question is, can you sell it?

Mr. Albert: I understand boards like Moosonee and James Bay Lowlands start earlier. They start in August because they provide more time for people to take holidays in the winter. That kind of flexibility is there for boards that want to experiment. The problem you run into is simply the reaction in the community. I think the public is going to have the final say on any school board that tries to gerrymander the whole summer holiday season by starting school in the middle of August. Personally, I think you are rolling a boulder up a hill if you are going to try that.

Madam Chairman: The only thing is, you are adding two summer weeks in June, so you are not really affecting the tourism. It just moves it up two weeks. I am not sure it has the same major effect as perhaps Dr. Stephenson's proposal.

Mrs. Wilson: There is a group of eastern Ontario boards looking at that kind of model and they are saying they can keep the tourist industry happy by the two-week March break, because that would be a significant change there, and a profitable one. I think it is worth floating out, but I would look at Bette Stephenson before I did it.

Madam Chairman: Perhaps then we will ask research if it can come up with the report during Dr. Stephenson's time, and our committee can look at that.

Mr. Beer: Was that report a public document or was it internal?

Mrs. Wilson: It was internal but it was reported in the press. They did a lot of surveying around the province.

Mr. Beer: Like a lot of reports around here.

Mr. Mahoney: That is normal.

Madam Chairman: It still might have been a confidential cabinet document and done that.

Mrs. Wilson: It never reached the white paper stage.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just your regular cabinet document.

Mr. Beer: "For your eyes only."

Mr. Mahoney: Were you guys going through the garbage again?

Mrs. Wilson: Reactions to it do exist. They were official reactions and I think those are the things that would be useful to you.

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Madam Chairman: If they are official reactions, perhaps we can at least unearth those.

Mrs. Wilson: Why hang yourselves when you can see how somebody else did it?

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for a very stimulating presentation.

Our next presentation will be from the Ontario Catholic Secondary School Principals' Association; or if I am not too familiar, I could call you the OCSSPA, that I can handle. Welcome back to our committee. We are looking forward to hearing your presentation today. You might start by identifying yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Renaud: I am Norm Renaud. I am the current president of the Ontario Catholic Secondary School Principals' Association and I am a vice-principal at Holy Names High School in Windsor.

Mr. DiRocco: I am Dan DiRocco. I am the treasurer of our association and I am the principal of St. Elizabeth Catholic High School in Thornhill.

Mr. Rooney: I am Jim Rooney, past president. I had the honour of being with you in July and September as president of OCSSPA. I am principal of Bishop MacDonnell High School, one of the oldest Catholic high schools in Ontario.

Sister Corrigan: I am Sister Lucille Corrigan, a member of the Congregation of Notre Dame

and principal of St. Patrick Secondary School, one of the youngest high schools in the province.

Madam Chairman: Please begin whenever you are ready.

Mr. Renaud: The Ontario Catholic Secondary School Principals' Association, which we represent, is a voluntary organization composed of principals and vice-principals of our Catholic secondary schools across Ontario.

Prime among our concerns and always underlying our collaboration in trend-setting in education is the question, "What is the purpose of school?" We welcome this opportunity to share our ideas and concerns with you today in the evolving process set in motion by the select committee on education.

On reviewing the goals of education in Ontario and publishing a report with appropriate recommendations, the committee now wishes to explore specifics in regard to some of the problems identified, among these the length of the school year and day. We are glad to share our reactions.

We note that the many goals of education articulated by the government are presently being pursued within the context of the school year with varying degrees of success. We question whether there is something structurally flawed in the present setup that prevents the achievement of these goals. The flexibility of the present system, if used as intended, should be adequate to reach these goals. What may be lacking is the creativity to make use of that flexibility or the means to acquire necessary resources.

We must be prepared to examine how the many permutations and combinations of hours, weeks and months present a year more beneficial to the school's raison d'être, the student. Basic to each examiner's conclusions is her or his notion of the essence of school. In an increasingly complex society with so much instability at the most delicate, fragile time of adolescent years when value choices are being made and the students are struggling to define themselves, school has become the single most important anchoring factor of their lives.

Our vision of school as a community is opposed to that of school as a learning factory. Your own recommendations would seem to indicate that you share the same vision. You call for increased stability, increased counselling, increased nurturing of all that cements the bond that spells belonging to a community, all that is the antithesis of school as a production line that would fill our corridors with urban nomads.

We hold that schools have a life of their own. They constitute real communities within a larger social entity. The schools are not mere incubators holding learners until they magically hatch. The daily life experienced in the school community helps to determine the future. Successful schools have a community base and they promote this sense of community.

We are aware the question impacts on numerous aspects of education: curriculum, deployment of personnel, finances, teaching strategies, definition of credits, family vacations, employment practices, professional development opportunities for teachers, athletic programs and other co-curriculars.

We are restricting our presentation to a few basic questions and concerns that have surfaced in our examination of such current suggestions as the following:

1. Year-round schooling to expand flexibility in curriculum offerings. Let us look at what is already in existence: a regular school day which can run between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.; summer day school, summer night school, night school, alternative schools, private schools, home schooling, private study, home instruction, correspondence courses, co-operative education, ties with business, interdisciplinary courses involving travel and firsthand experience, traditional schools, semestered schools; all this plus a wealth of community programs offered by volunteer groups and private clubs and agencies.

Does such a proposal address a financial or an educational problem?

2. Triple semesters with one month off between each. This might effect some savings because a third of the students would be on holidays for a four-month period. However, it would result in a longer school day if the definition of a credit was maintained as is. It could also lead to quicker teacher burnout if the teacher were to instruct year-round. On the other hand, a teacher could become a guest lecturer if not rooted in a school for an extended period of time.

It might serve the needs of the university-bound student, but at what cost to others?

3. The six-week module. This too would serve more the needs of the university-bound students, but this would also encourage a cafeteria-style approach to education. Students with learning styles and needs different from those of the university-bound students would suffer a certain disorientation with the frequent holiday periods and large chunks of unsupervised time. The

custodial functions of schools would suffer in the process.

Another negative would be the added pressure of more opportunities for part-time employment. The continuity of school co-curricular programs would be seriously compromised.

4. Mid-August commencement of the school year. The advantages are notable. For one, it would permit more use of outdoor facilities and increase the length of the season for certain athletic activities such as soccer, rugby, football, cross-country. Second, such a school year organization would create a clean break between semesters by interposing an extended Christmas break of three weeks between semesters.

Sensitive to our mandate from Christian parents, we would greet with displeasure any move in this direction which would serve the cause of greater secular efficiency but possibly lead to a further erosion of the Christian feast of Christmas. There would be a strong possibility that activities connected with this Canadian cultural and spiritual heritage would be endangered at the high school level. Ending the semester with examinations prior to Christmas neither encourages nor allows a proper lead-up to and celebration of the feast in a school setting.

5. Lengthening of the school day. Some would argue that the school day needs lengthening to accommodate all the newly mandated additions to an already crowded curriculum. The provincial government has also stated its desire to make Ontario a competitive player on the world economic stage. Some would suggest that a lengthening of the school day would facilitate the achievement of such a strategic goal. Students in Ontario would thus experience the academic rigours which would make them competitive with their counterparts in Japan and South Korea.

But there may be little correlation between the length of the school day and academic achievement. There are other societies with longer and shorter school days than Ontario which are not as competitive or as productive. Before any radical changes are contemplated, studies should be carried out to see if other factors influence the economic competitive capacity of a society, such things as the work ethic, cultural traditions, family structure and values, economic philosophies and practices, freedoms, recreational opportunities, social discipline and the ethnic composition of society.

Providing more time for anything does not guarantee that it will be better used and result in more achievement. Does more instructional time and more homework time lead to greater achievement? Some studies in the United States suggest that the effect is not overwhelming at all. For example, of four interventions used for improving reading and mathematics achievement–cross-age tutoring, computer-assisted instruction, reduced class size and increased instructional time–the least benefit in cost-effectiveness was the last strategy, increased instructional time. Rather, we must use more creativity and we must enrich the time available within the existing schedule.

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In an era of teacher shortages, now and well into the turn of the century, there may be prohibitive costs attached to a proposal to lengthen the school year or the school day. Collective negotiations might define a teacher workload in such a way as to render the shortage even worse than projected.

Therefore, we recommend:

1. Only a reorganization of the school year and/or school day which would enhance the anchoring aspects of schools as communities of learners.

2. More studies should be conducted regarding the impact of any restructuring of the school year and/or school day.

3. Wherever possible, boards should ensure a variety of school organizations that will permit free movement of students from one section of the province to the other without undue hardship.

4. Ministry resources and funding be made available to boards interested in experimenting in the Ontario context with a different school-year model, compatible with recommendation 1.

That is our presentation. We would be glad to answer any questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will start off the questioning with Mr. Johnston, followed by Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will ask just one question because I want to leave some for Mr. Mahoney. Now that we are on the same wavelength I know he will have several that I would have asked.

Mr. Mahoney: You've got to stop passing me notes, though.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Let me just ask you the one which I know is close to the heart of Mr. Rooney and the extension of the football season semester. I understand your sensitivity around your particular community and mission around the Christmas season, but let me ask you how concerned you really are about that notion of exams, etc., just prior to Christmas. In the old

system, just a number of years ago, very few Catholic schools were semestered. Most of them were on the full-year approach and most of them had exams before Christmas at that stage, as I recall.

Is that not something which is manageable in terms of the mission and the celebration of that particular feast season, or is it highly problematic as far as you are concerned?

Mr. Rooney: I would be delighted to respond. While one may see certain economic, or whatever, advantages to that, we do believe clearly as an association, as individual administrators, that given our mandate and our parents' expectations and our legal responsibilities, it is very critical to be in school, if you give credence to our premises of anchoring and the building of community and what all of that entails. One of the key elements of what you believe is that you must celebrate that and you must come to grips with the celebration in a manner that is significant and meaningful, because that then enhances the community part. So, it is important. While one could say it would be nice to have all those other things, they would be paid for at a real, significant price if we adjusted the year to conclude in December.

My experience of the traditional model is that we had exams in November. The reports went home in early December, but we had the month of December for preparation. Given the kind of structure of semestering as it is, if you bumped it back, that is one of the real risks that we would see in our system that would be a very serious price to pay, because we do not see adjusting Christmas to November 25 and juggling it in that mandate, obviously.

Mr. Renaud: That is a real key to it, and I concur with what was said by Jim. In the past, all our exams were held in November, not in December at all. That month of December then was thought about with the celebration of the feast of Christmas, with everything leading up to it. We find it would be a very tremendous blow to our whole system to take that out simply to say, "It is a nice cubical situation of going from here to here and then starting after a break." We find that we would not be in favour of that at all.

Mr. Di Rocco: My own recollection is likewise in terms of the exams. They did occur in November. I always associated examinations with the Grey Cup, actually. It was that particular week preceding Grey Cup week. You associated exams with that. At the end of the week, exams were over and you enjoyed yourself watching that game.

Mr. Mahoney: Both would give you a hangover.

Mr. Di Rocco: Yes, whatever it was. But it was not associated with the celebration of Christmas.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What you are essentially saying to me, though, is that it is not possible within the semester system to have those exams on November 26 or whatever the usual date for Grey Cup is; that they have to be some time in December; that it would be impossible to have an instructor who–

Mr. Di Rocco: Right. You would end up with approximately two weeks to three weeks in December, prior to the Christmas break, if you did it with two equal semesters beginning in August, where, in essence, the academic portion of the work is done and over with. There is that psychological finality to it for the student, and what are you going to do for two or three weeks?

Yes, you can say, "Celebrate the feast that you are celebrating." I do not think it is only that. You do want to fill it up with regular schoolwork as well as, that is in addition to; it is all part and parcel of that. It is primarily the co-curricular program that would suffer, which is associated with Christmas celebrations; not just necessarily assemblies in the school, but visits by school bands to local elementary schools, to senior citizens' homes, playing Christmas concerts and so on. It is part of the community service that you want the students to participate in as well.

Mr. Rooney: To amplify briefly, on this year's school calendar we closed on December 16. When you put your 10 examination days in, then our kids would have been gone for the whole month. The other component–Dan has mentioned it clearly–that ties into Catholic secondary schools, certainly is the whole dimension of serving, whatever that is. We find it difficult to bring the Christmas hamper to someone on November 28; it is not very practical. It just does not fit into the mosaic and kind of that belief.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Canned Christmas.

Madam Chairman: Could I just ask a supplementary on that? You say that right now the exams occur at the end of November in your semestered schools. Are the ones you are referring to all nonsemestered?

Mr. Rooney: No. I was responding to Mr. Johnston's comment about our experience in schools. In our high school experience we used to have November exams in a nonsemestered structure, but January exams in a semestered structure.

Mr. Renaud: In a nonsemestered school currently the exams are held in November, yes.

Mr. Rooney: But the hypothesis was that if we back it up, then we are backing up holus-bolus a semester system into closing in the middle of December if we were to back it up that block of time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have finished. My other questions will be asked by Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Villeneuve: Thank you very much for your presentation. Are you advocating a universal break for all of the schools, be they separate, French/English, what have you? We have had a number of people who have brought forth the fact that we have just had a winter break that was not a universal break. Certain parts of the province had their winter break a week sooner. Do you have any particular direction to give the committee on that?

Mr. Renaud: I think we would advocate that we would want the break to be similar throughout the province, based on a few pertinent examples that I received last year, I believe, and this year as well, where some school boards went one week and some boards went another week.

If the husband and wife were both teachers, one with one board and one with another, and their child was in an elementary school and in the high school it was different again, I do not think they saw each other from morning until night. It became a very unruly and unwieldy situation. I would probably advocate that we keep them throughout the province in that way.

Mr. Villeneuve: Some universality here.

Mr. Renaud: Yes.

Mr. Rooney: There are certainly advantages to families and that is obviously a priority for our parents and our system. None the less, we would hopefully retain the autonomy to be able to identify that it would complement. Separate secondary schools were in school last week specifically for the reasons mentioned.

Mr. Villeneuve: You may not be familiar with it, but we had a presentation yesterday by a French-speaking teachers' group–l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-Ontariens–that said it does not very much appreciate being back on, say January 2, because in French culture and folklore New Year's Day is more the family celebration; Christmas is more the Christian celebration. If we are to satisfy everyone here, it looks like Christmas break would go into January further than it has.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If we are careful, we can push it to February.

1520

Mr. Villeneuve: Do you have any comments on that one?

Mr. Renaud: I think this past year, though, was an anomaly in a sense, because it occurred on a Sunday. We face that every six years, I believe, or with the leap year in there maybe seven. But I think the ministry had already solved that problem for us, if I recall. I read it a little too late to bring it to even our board's attention. At the bottom of the outline for the school year there was the option to move that day, and January 2 became a holiday as well by moving it to June. I think the board had that option. We would have that problem come up only about once every six or seven years. I do not think that should be rearranged just for that single occasion.

Sister Corrigan: I think the French will be very satisfied with the Christmas holiday that the ministry has published for next year. We start holidays on Friday, December 22, and go back on Monday, January 8. It should make everyone happy.

When you asked your question, I really thought of a different break and I must say my mind went to the spring break rather than the Christmas one. It is the one that has caused us difficulty on two different occasions that I remember in the last eight or 10 years. I would again be very reluctant to see us have our students out on holidays during the week that prepares for one of the two chief celebration days in our Christian faith. Everything that we have said about Christmas I would say in heavy print for the workup to Easter and Good Friday as well.

Mr. Villeneuve: Yes, I certainly agree with what you say. Somehow or other, both Christmas and Easter tend to be much more commercialized than they should be, and I appreciate the school trying to bring us back on track here to some degree.

Mrs. O'Neill: In your association, because you represent the whole province, I find your third recommendation interesting. I would like you to say a bit more about that. First of all, is the transferring of students a real problem? I would like you to say a little more about what kind of variety being picked up by boards would help.

Mr. Rooney: If I may respond, obviously students in the province sometimes go from area A to area B, and if all of area B happens to be of one kind of school and the student did not come from that kind of school, that is kind of the issue we are talking about.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you talking about a semestered area?

Mr. Rooney: From a nonsemestered to a semestered area.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is basically the area you are referring to?

Mr. Rooney: That is the issue, sure. Certainly, where possible and with the size of certain communities or for whatever other reasons, students might have that opportunity if they move in. Semestering is one of those snowball things that just grew and grew; and as we see now, large boards are just opting out of the traditional models we have had.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you suggesting, and I think this did come up in our previous set of hearings, that perhaps each board should be mandated to have a variety even if it is only one of the other kind.

Mr. Rooney: Certainly large boards could. I think it would be a serious penalty on small boards if they had to have two schools. I am not so sure, but I really like the recommendation from the committee that wanted to have some research to study it, because I do not think we have that kind of data and information in terms of the quality issue and the impacts it has.

Mrs. O'Neill: Because you put it in as one of four recommendations, as a possibility, I am wondering how important that is. It obviously seems to be. I guess that goes back to my first question, which I am not sure you answered. Is this a real problem?

Mr. Rooney: It is a problem for students who move who cannot be accommodated fully in their new school setting.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are there many of those students? I guess I have to ask that question.

Mr. Rooney: Not per school certainly, but it is if two or three families move in and they happen to have two or three students. Then it can be an area of concern.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you have transitional courses within your schools that would help these people?

Mr. Rooney: In some cases, yes, but not in all cases. Part of that recommendation certainly was to support your recommendation earlier–I believe it was recommendation 20–that boards explore alternative models; to give you some of that support, as well, to say, "Let's look at it; certainly have some good data, but look at it in a way that would enhance the freer movement of students."

Mr. DiRocco: You were asking for statistics. I do not know how representative my experience would be just this current year. We have had seven students out of approximately 775 who fell into the category that Mr. Rooney was describing where they wanted to attend our school, but we were semestered and they were coming from a nonsemestered school. We could not offer them a continuation of the programs they were accustomed to, so they went to another school that, in fact, was like the one they were accustomed to.

We were fortunate in our board, the same board, to have such a school. If not, they would have gone to the public school and that was fine, too. That would have been the alternative, but sometimes you may have, in fact, both the public school and the separate secondary school operating in the same way and there would be no choice.

I do not know whether seven out of 775 is a great percentage, but that is my own experience just this current year, that we had seven students in that category.

Mrs. O'Neill: I presume you are all speaking to your boards about offering some kind of alternative.

Mr. DiRocco: At present in my board we have that possibility but six schools are semestered and only one is not.

Mrs. O'Neill: This is a more technical question: Are the boards then easily able to buy from the public to the separate with no problem about that in the community?

Mr. DiRocco: Yes.

Mr. O'Neill: That is one of the conditions upon which the boards will purchase from each other?

Mr. DiRocco: There is a very good relationship.

Madam Chairman: I would very much like to thank you for your presentation to our committee today. You have certainly brought up a few factors of which we were not aware. We do appreciate that.

Any final comments?

Mr. Rooney: We look forward to coming back and talking about a significant subject like funding.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: See you in September.

Madam Chairman: I am not sure we should be committing our committee at this stage to September since the House leaders may have something to say about that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have them in our pocket. Do not worry about it.

Mr. Furlong: You mean you had them.

Madam Chairman: The next presentation will be by the Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials.

Welcome to our committee. The first time I had a chance to talk with your association, I believe, was in Windsor. I kept wanting to call you EIEIO and I knew that was not quite right, so I think I have it straight now. It is OAEAO.

Mr. McLachlan: Spelled backwards correctly, as well.

Madam Chairman: Spelled backwards correctly. Anyway, welcome to our committee. If you would just identify yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard, begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Mr. McLachlan: I am John McLachlan, president-elect of OA. On my left is Harold Brathwaite. He is a member of the education committee that was also involved in preparing this brief and serves in OA functions on various committees.

I would like to say that we are doing some pinch-hitting for you today. Brian Todd, chairman of our education committee, had intended to be here and present. With the change of date, he had to make a decision between a family holiday that was planned and the presentation, so you get me as second choice.

Mr. Mahoney: He made the right decision.

Mr. McLachlan: I would not comment on that, but we will not argue on that one.

Stu Howard, president of OA this year, is doing one of the tasks of a president in flying between meetings today. I think right now he is sitting in a taxi somewhere in our fair city talking about traffic patterns, so we will pinch-hit on his behalf as best we can.

1530

I would like first to talk to you a little about the school year. I believe you have a brief in front of you, and although it has one little section that may have a stroke through it in one of the copies we have seen, we would like you to ignore that stroke and carry on.

Interjection: There are plenty of strokes.

Mr. McLachlan: Yes. I understand that.

Rather than read the paper to you, I would like to hit just certain highlights regarding the school year. It really goes to page 3, and those I will read.

Issues Attached to the School Year: We see a number of external factors that affect the school year, the September-to-June tradition, and a need to take a look at that, especially in urban areas. The belief in many communities is that our school year should be going 12 months and there is concern over the July and August period. Related to that is the saving of money. We see that as a factor we certainly cannot ignore. I think it is related to some things I am hearing very currently and very locally; that is, the actions of youth in summer months and some concerns about their activities in the summer.

More internal, from an educational viewpoint, would be that shorter holidays, if we made a move that way, would produce a greater retention in learning. There would be a greater flexibility in curriculum data, and certainly shorter time units would have some impact on enrichment and remedial programs.

Under the recommendations that are listed, we think that a research committee examining the factors in extending the school year at the elementary and secondary levels should take place. We would like to see pilot projects while research was being carried on and, of course, we would like to participate in any research and work that is done in examining the school year.

We do not see major changes required. We see the need for local autonomy and local authority on the items, so that a rural board could retain a school year that made sense for that community and so that an urban board, if it wished to change, could adjust. But we think there is some research needed, we think there is some piloting needed for us to determine the best way to go.

I think that is a kind of quick summary of the thoughts of the members of the education committee on the school year. We represent a fairly diverse background and we have tried to look at the input of various members to that committee. If you would like, we can try to respond to questions on that part and then go to the second section, which would be the school day. What is your pleasure?

Madam Chairman: I think, in view of the fact that Mr. Howard may be here at any time, you might wish to go on and finish the school day and at that stage he would be available for questions, but it is certainly up to you. Normally, we do complete the entire presentation before going to questions.

Mr. Brathwaite: Essentially, the focus here again is on local school autonomy. To summa-

rize this, there is no suggestion that there is any evidence for an extension of the school day in Ontario, so the recommendation is to permit local boards to determine opening and closing times. I should reiterate the fact that this proposal represents what we believe is a majority of opinion.

However, we do recognize that there will be some dissident opinion. We also also recognize that there are some potential problems. For example, because this is not a wide problem, we do not address the question of the extended day and heritage language programs that do exist in a few jurisdictions, and of the implications, such as the possible renegotiating of collective agreements, that would be implied if the school day were extended beyond the current five and a half hours.

Essentially, we are again proposing that the school day remain the way it is at the moment, the school boards having the autonomy to determine opening and closing times.

Madam Chairman: My goodness, you were much quicker than I thought. Now that I have my tea in hand, I apologize for that. I thought you would be going on a little longer. We will start the questioning with Mr. Mahoney, followed by Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, no need for me to ask any questions.

Mr. Mahoney: No. Richard, you can leave.

The comment was made, I think, right at the beginning that you felt that–I forget the exact wording–the shorter, more frequent breaks would increase retention by the students. We have heard that and we have heard the opposite. On what basis do you make that statement? Can you prove it to us in any substantive way or do you know of any studies that could be useful?

Mr. McLachlan: I can show you studies that I think would prove both; which is what you have just said to me, I realize. I think it is based more on working with teachers and the impressions of teachers. They feel that there is less loss in a shorter period of time. But it is just one factor. I would be misleading you if I said I think there is a massive difference. I think there is some improvement in retention with the shorter gap.

Mr. Mahoney: We have been talking so far, for the most part to educators and people directly involved in dealing with the children, and the concern is expressed, I think quite appropriately, that any change should really be for the benefit of the end product, being the educated student. But do you see any massive improvements from an administrative point of view in the areas of resource management of either the human resources or the physical plant that would perhaps lend substantive weight to a decision in favour of, say 12-month schooling or the use of the facilities over 12 months?

Mr. McLachlan: I believe that in some communities there could be some saving of money, which tends to get administrators paying keen attention. I think that would vary from community to community, because in some cases we have difficulty with the facilities in summer school just because of the heat and something as simple as air-conditioning or lack of air-conditioning.

Mr. Mahoney: Could I interrupt you there? The saving-of-money issue I thought was pointed out rather well. It might have been by the Ontario Federation of Labour, but someone pointed out earlier that you would not necessarily save money, because all of a sudden you have got to pay 12-month salaries keeping plants open. I do not buy into the maintenance argument. I think buildings can be maintained while people are using them and operating them and, in fact, the reduction of vandalism–having gone through a terrible problem in my community school a few years back–in the summer may add up to a plus financially.

Have you done an analysis that could quantitatively say that an average board, or a specific board if necessary, would save money?

Mr. McLachlan: We have not done an analysis, but I do not see the change of pay, to comment on your one article, as being a problem of 10 versus 12 months. I see it as working it into quarters.

1540

Mr. Mahoney: Because they are paid for 12 anyway now.

Mr. Brathwaite: If I could share with you the reaction of members of the committee when we discussed this item, there was a general feeling that those of us who are administrators would suffer because we would be asked to do more, but we would not get an additional complement of administrators to help us do the task.

The comment was also made with respect to potential savings that there are boards which currently do not have adequate space and have to acquire portables and what have you, and that the problems of these boards could be alleviated somewhat by having year-round school. So, not having either to acquire portables or build

schools as quickly is a possible benefit to some boards.

Mr. Mahoney: I will leave the balance of my questions for Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Chairman: I am sure Mr. Johnston does not have any questions left since he has mindread, but just in case–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I thought Steven was going to ask the next two questions, but since he did not, I will pick up on those that he decided to hold. The first is to either Mr. Brathwaite or Mr. McLachlan. Is it true that people do not go to school in Nova Scotia very much at all or is this just a typographical mistake that there are 117 instructional days plus? Should that be 187? I was going to say that, if not there is going to be a massive migration of student-aged children to Nova Scotia.

Mr. McLachlan: Followed by the teachers.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. The second matter may seem to be peripheral to this, but I do not think it is and it is not something that we have really touched on very much, although in some ways it is a question begged by many of the things that have been raised, and that is in terms of looking at the pedagogical result of changing the school day and looking at outcomes, whether they be the Korean example that has been used or other European examples. Is it the length of the school day or the school year that is important here or is it in fact other methods of teaching that are important?

The factor that we have not brought into this at all at the moment in terms of the reality of the instructional school day at this stage in Ontario is the diversity of application of homework. I have schools in my riding where there is no homework given out in the elementary panel at all and other schools where kids are doing an hour and a half at night.

I think there is mixed evidence as to whether or not that question of homework, that extra hour and a half or hour a day or whatever that some students undertake, makes much of a difference in terms of their educational outcomes.

I wonder if you will make a comment on that, because it has not shown itself directly in any of the commentary we have received at all.

Mr. McLachlan: Perhaps I can respond to that and then ask Harold to do the same. May I also introduce Stu Howard, who had the very honourable intention of being here earlier, but learned of difficulties, I am sure.

First and foremost is the quality of the teacher in the learning process, as you know. The amount of homework, in my experience, is not the key contributor towards the learning that takes place. You will find a great deal of variety, and it is based on the philosophy of a school or principal; it is based on the philosophy of the teacher, and it is based on the teaching methods that are used.

You referenced elementary. I am sure you are aware of the many guidelines that exist. As children grow up, it starts to increase a little bit. In intermediate division at the elementary level, we have a reasonable amount; "reasonable" meaning in the one-hour to one-and-a-half-hour time.

But to tie learning to that really makes me concerned, and I am not trying to waffle on it. I have seen evidence of effectiveness in both ways. I think that is where the autonomy of the teacher, the autonomy of the school and the autonomy of the board are appropriate if the end result is satisfactory. If the result of the students is a result that the community and the professionals are happy with, then we have the happy, learning, progressing student.

Mr. Brathwaite: The Toronto board–I will put a plug in for my board–recently had a research study done on the question of homework. What it clearly indicates is that it makes a difference, depending on the type of homework. Homework that is repetitive, that simply takes what students have done already or know or that is supposed to fill time is useless. Homework that is exploratory, homework that permits kids to work in a collaborative fashion, homework that would involve parents is very useful. Therefore, it comes down to doing adequate in-service with your staff and having a certain philosophy about homework and student interaction.

It will also depend on how your schools are organized and the interest taken by the school administration. The school administration should monitor very closely homework that is given and ensure either that students do not get homework that is not terribly helpful or do not get too many homework assignments. If a school administration is vigilant in that area, the students will obviously benefit.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not want to get into a major discussion, although I would love at some point to discuss the merits or some of the problems and social biases that in my view are presumably middle-class biases around a lot of homework. That is not what I was really trying to get at.

At some schools–I could think of one French immersion school in my riding–kids in the

primary section of the elementary panel are coming home with a substantial amount of homework on a given night. Those kids are, in fact, getting an extra day of school or instructional time a week. It is not with the teacher but with the parent in the home. They have an extended year already, or an extended day, however you want to look at it.

I am wondering if we have done any measurements of those outcomes from boards and schools that have taken that kind of approach because surely that would answer, in part, some of our questions about whether or not moving to one of the California models, etc., would really make any substantial difference in the outcomes for students. If it does not, what is the point?

Mr. McLachlan: To the best of my knowledge, our group has not done research and I am not aware of a research item on that specific topic. More often the change is related to the wishes of the parent group. The French immersion group that you referenced would be a particular group that would likely have certain expectations for the students and put the students in that program and would prefer to have a reasonably high amount of homework. That might be a guess.

Mr. Brathwaite: I would like to add one comment, simply that research that we know on engaged time on tasks indicates that where you have engaged time on tasks, and that is carefully monitored, students again achieve better results.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have not done this yet–I know committee members are worried that I have not done this yet–but maybe our representative from the Ministry of Education, who has been sitting here and not receiving any instruction or any requests from this committee up to this point, feeling unused and probably neglected by us, perhaps could go through to the ministry and see if we can get any information, specifically either on time-on-task studies that have been done or on any studies that have been done on the use of homework within the present system in Ontario that we could look at that might be useful to us.

Mr. Chairman: Just for the record, I will tell you that we have received no objection or complaint from the ministry about their staff person being underutilized, but I am sure they will be happy to get the information for you, anyway.

Mrs. O'Neill: I just have a comment. I find it quite interesting to see this Regional Education Council, Eastern Ontario report cropping up all over the place. I happened to be at the meeting at which there were actually the preliminary discussions of this paper. It has been copied so often, it is almost impossible to be read at the moment, but I find it interesting that it continues to be used. I wondered why you attached it. Do you buy into it?

Mr. McLachlan: If I may do a good shuffle on this one, I would say that our president, who has arrived, is a worthy representative from eastern Ontario, and whether we want to hear it or not, he is constantly singing the praises of eastern Ontario to us.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is one thing we have in common.

Mr. McLachlan: I was going to give him a chance to respond to that.

1550

Mr. Howard: The Regional Education Council, Eastern Ontario, just for the information of the members, is a body of the directors of education from the eastern Ontario region which is convened by the regional director to advise the ministry on policy and to receive advice.

I think a year or two ago the March break and the Easter vacation came in close proximity. So one director, who shall not be named at this point, had the bright idea that the March break should be moved and put up against the Easter break, so that instead of interrupting the second semester on two occasions it would be interrupted only once.

There was not unanimous support, partly because Catholic boards prefer to use the week prior to Easter for the Holy Week curriculum. But some of our more progressive directors said: "You're just tinkering away. Instead of moving the March break in 1988, you should revise the whole school year, because it is way out of date. It is set to the agricultural calendar and not to the industrial calendar of the 20th century."

Two of the directors went away, prepared this paper and got, I think, practically unanimous support from their colleagues in eastern Ontario. They thought they had such a bright idea that they sent it to the ministry, and it has been sitting on a number of desks for a long time. What it summarizes is a lot of the conventional wisdom about what is wrong with our present school year and school day, school year particularly.

As the members may realize, it calls for splitting the school year into two equal parts, cut in the middle by a summer vacation which would begin in June and end in August. It makes a lot more sense in view of the semestered system.

These directors were also prepared to say that it had some advantages for the elementary schools as well.

I can elaborate further, but one of the offshoots of this would be that we would have to change the nature of the teacher contracts, which do not fit the semestered year. Other advantages which we felt were in this proposal were that probably there would be better use made of school facilities and that the summer break would be shorter and more manageable in terms of being used either for recreation or for a third semester or demi-semester for learning programs.

We feel that this scheme we have advanced is a working possibility, and I think there are many boards around the province that would love to have the opportunity, if given that opportunity, to try something like this.

Frankly–I may be repeating what my colleagues have said–we think that the approach to this problem of the school year should be twofold, that it should be studied and that there should be considerable research done, but that at the same time the boards of education that wished to should be given the opportunity to experiment. That would add data to the research and enable the government of Ontario to come to a good conclusion with respect to the school year.

Mrs. O'Neill: Mr. Howard, I am having a little trouble interpreting whether this is still just an eastern Ontario initiative–I did see it in Windsor as well–or have you been able to convince your colleagues before the pilot projects or experimentation in flexibility you are requesting? I guess I am interested to see if your executive is split on this.

Mr. Howard: No. We have an educational policy committee within OAEAO and it was its decision to incorporate this document in its brief. In talking with that committee, I feel that it has a lot of support there. I have not taken it as far as presenting it to our board of governors, but my impression is, and this is not very precise, that this would have a lot of support among all supervisory officers.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay, I will accept that. May I ask you to explain page 9 to me a little? I guess I am just not able to get the full impact of that page on first reading. Could you tell me how it is best read?

Mr. Howard: I have difficulty understanding page 9 that is not an attachment to the eastern Ontario brief?

Mr. McLachlan: No. I do not think you are referring to eastern Ontario.

Mr. Howard: I am going to pass that to my colleagues. They know what that means; I am not sure that I do.

Mrs. O'Neill: You people seem to be able to hand questions one to the other. I guess if we have one expert on each page that is sufficient.

Mr. McLachlan: Could you be specific in your question?

Mrs. O'Neill: I am sorry. I cannot pick up the best way to read this. With regard to advantages and disadvantages, first of all, I am having trouble seeing where the advantages and disadvantages are. How do you read this in reference to advantages and disadvantages? What about the 45/15? What do those numbers up at the top mean?

Mr. Brathwaite: Those are types of reorganization, 45 days in school, 15 days off.

Mrs. O'Neill: Then where do we get the advantages and disadvantages?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: A 33 per cent capacity increase if you use that system of 45/15, changes affecting roving teachers, etc.

Mrs. O'Neill: In other words, you have to make it up in your own mind whether this is an advantage or disadvantage. Is that right?

Mr. McLachlan: I think you have just pointed out perhaps a weakness in that page. I am not sure, when I hear the question, "advantage and disadvantage" is correct. "Impact" would have been a better word. I think you are correct in pointing that out. Some people would say each is an advantage, but I think it is mainly an impact page.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay, that helps me a lot. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Just as a supplementary, what is the difference between a C-6 and a C-6M on that page, and what do they mean to begin with?

Mrs. O'Neill: This is after the 90/30 column.

Madam Chairman: That is right, after the 90/30 column.

Mr. McLachlan: I am embarrassed to say at the moment I have drawn a blank on that. It has been some time since I was in the discussion on this page. If it comes back to me, may I get back in on it?

Madam Chairman: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Howard: Can I jump in here? Let me explain what I think has happened. You have the text of the brief, which was thought out carefully by the educational relations policy committee.

Then they attached to it research material that they have been able to gather together. We do not pretend to understand it or to agree with it necessarily, but we thought it would be useful for you to have it.

If you are interested, and there is difficulty in interpreting it, we can assist, but none of us at this table pretends to have mastered it all. I know that sheet covers the models that have been put together through a computer survey of the year organizations in the United States and Canada and it is drawn from one of those research papers. I cannot tell you which one.

Mrs. O'Neill: This page could be quite useful; that is why I would like to have the full impact of it.

Mr. McLachlan: Is that a new Ontario Public School Teacher' Federation report?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is the OTF.

Mr. McLachlan: Okay, that is the study. They heard it yesterday.

Mrs. O'Neill: Oh, okay. They did not include it in theirs, though, did they?

Mr. Howard: I wonder if they understood it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They did not understand it, so they did not include it.

Madam Chairman: Everybody is not as green as this, because they think obviously we are of superior intellect and know what this means. I am sure we do; we just have to figure it out.

Mr. Mahoney: It would not be the first time we had to make a decision not understanding.

Mrs. O'Neill: If you do have more details to back up page 9, I think, because it is such a good summary sheet of all the different possibilities, we would find it helpful.

Mr. McLachlan: The one thing that we will do is go back and do our homework on this particular item, and if we may submit to the committee a response on this question, we will do so.

Madam Chairman: Certainly, that would be excellent, or even if you want to keep it informal and call my office and speak to me.

Mr. Mahoney: Then we are going to ask you the questions.

Madam Chairman: On second thought, in writing would be preferable.

Thank you very much for your presentation to our committee today. We do appreciate that you took the time and effort to come.

Our next presentation will be from the Ontario Business Education Association. Welcome to our committee. We all have your brief in front of us, so you could begin whenever you are ready, if you would just start by identifying yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO BUSINESS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Tuttle: My name is Sandra Tuttle, and I am president of the Ontario Business Education Association. I am very proud to say that I have teaching experience of 20 years and currently I am on secondment with the faculty of education, University of Toronto.

Mr. Renner: I am Al Renner. I am past president of the Ontario Business Education Association. I worked in industry prior to coming into teaching. I have taught and been head of a department, and for the past 10 years I have been co-ordinator of business studies for the Halton Board of Education.

1600

Mrs. Tuttle: I believe that our written brief was distributed to you just moments ago. I would suggest that you peruse for just a moment the executive summary, which will allow you to focus quite readily on the main recommendations in our paper.

Madam Chairman: Do you intend to read your brief following this?

Mrs. Tuttle: For the record, Madam Chair, if you do not mind. Then of course we would welcome questions once the paper has been read.

Madam Chairman: Yes, I was going to suggest you read it, not only for the record but also because we do have a television audience this afternoon and it might be rather confused if we start questioning you and they do not know what we are talking about.

Mrs. Tuttle: I addressed this committee in September on behalf of OBEA regarding the organization of the process of education, and I would like to say once again that we very much appreciate the opportunity you have provided to all interested parties to offer input on matters that impact very significantly on our education system.

Allow me to briefly state that the Ontario Business Education Association/l' Association Education Commerciale de l'Ontario, which I will refer to as OBEA/AECO, was founded in 1895. It is a professional organization of business educators from across the province. We represent over 5,000 business teachers who develop and deliver business studies curriculum in the secondary schools of the province. OBEA/

AECO acts as a voice for business teachers on matters that pertain to business education.

Please allow me to draw your attention to this fact. Our focus is on curriculum and issues that impact on the effective delivery of our programs. From that curricular perspective, OBEA/AECO supports the extension of the school day and/or the school year as an opportunity to meet the changing educational needs of an information-age society. Our expertise is not in the area of school administration. Therefore, we will leave the more pragmatic issues of administering such an expanded system to those who have the background in that area.

Over the years, business courses have provided young people in the intermediate and senior divisions with opportunities to reinforce and apply communication, computation, problem-solving and human relations skills and understanding, as well as work attitudes and ethics in business and world-of-work settings. Such basic business skills as keyboarding, accounting and computer use are important components of a business studies program, and through such experiential learning activities as work experience, co-operative education and community involvement are easily transferred to the workplace.

Many business studies courses in the senior division provide educational opportunities that can lead to direct employment upon graduation in accounting, information management, retailing and marketing, and computer fields.

It is our hope that in the years ahead these excellent opportunities within the business studies curriculum will be more readily accessible to a growing clientele of adult learners as well as to our traditional adolescent learners.

The challenge ahead is indeed a significant one. Over the next decade, the economy will undergo significant changes and challenges driven by technological advances, demographic trends and alterations to current international trading patterns. If we are to remain competitive in this knowledge-intensive global economy, an education system "must prepare individuals to be mobile, flexible, adaptable and versatile. The ability to learn will be the premium skill in the future." I quote from the Economic Council of Canada. Ontarians of all ages must become lifelong learners.

Mr. Renner: The following factors are placing considerable pressure on our traditional education system:

1. A high school graduation diploma has become a basic requirement to attain even entry level jobs. Adults who left school without a diploma are returning in unprecedented numbers, most often to enrol in business courses. I direct your attention to the last two pages, the appendix. We can get into a discussion a little later, but it talks about the requests for credit evaluations over the past four years within the Halton Board of Education; that is, adults who are asking to have their transcripts re-evaluated in terms of completing diplomas. You will see that we have gone from 15 in 1985 to 405 in 1988, a significant trend back.

2. It is unlikely that an individual will enjoy only one career over a lifetime. Most studies indicate the probability of making five career changes, and retraining opportunities must be available at each point. "Educating the ageing baby boom generation will occupy the educational system at all levels." That is a quote from Foot, Demographic Profiles and Their Implications on Educational Enrolment, University of Toronto, Price of Quality Conference, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, February 1988.

3. Ontarians, regardless of age and in every community across the province, need assistance to cope with the highly technological information age.

4. The free trade deal recently negotiated by the federal government with the United States will exert escalating pressures on our labour markets. Programs to upgrade the existing workforce and to assist displaced workers will be needed.

5. Labour shortages are predicted in the near future as baby boomers move out of the workforce. "The problem of the next decade will be insufficient labour." Possible ways to alleviate this situation are to provide programs that (i) encourage entry and re-entry of women into the labour force and (ii) train immigrants to enter our labour force.

Mrs. Tuttle: For these reasons, the adult component of the school population will increase as the adolescent component decreases. This is a quote from Foot once again, "You're not going to be teaching 19-year-olds; you're going to be teaching 39-year-olds."

The challenge for our education system, therefore, is to provide opportunities to people of all ages to learn, to grow and to participate fully in our rapidly changing society. Existing traditional structures unfortunately place limitations on the programs that can be provided.

The education system must respond to this challenge by becoming more flexible, by altering the length of the school day and/or the school

year to meet the needs of a changing clientele. In order to accommodate attendance by all individuals seeking educational opportunities, schools must be accessible through more than traditional hours and must offer comparable quality programs, whether day, night or summer, in order to equalize educational opportunities for the citizens of Ontario.

Mr. Renner: Business education and the community: The Ministry of Skills Development, through Ontario's Training Strategy, is actively promoting a training culture among the private sector firms that will enhance the skills base of Ontario's workforce. However, statistics indicate a growing interest in secondary school credits and opportunities to earn a secondary school diploma, in many cases with concentration on business courses. Again, this is borne out in the appendix.

It therefore becomes the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to respond by providing greater access to formal education opportunities through local boards of education. Boards are best able to address the needs of a community and to provide easily accessible locations with well-qualified personnel and appropriate facilities.

The ramifications of this: A change of this magnitude will require the innovative minds and co-operative spirits of many of the stakeholders in education. If this government wishes to provide the same quality of education in an expanded school system, there is little doubt that additional funding is needed. We will mention briefly our concern in several areas.

First, the grant structure: To ensure the quality of delivery of night school and summer school programs, legislative grants must be equalized for all programs. Undoubtedly, the cost of instruction will increase in terms of physical and human resources. Increased funding must be made available to the education system. Since the global competitiveness of Canada depends on a well-educated and highly skilled labour market, it may be time for a stronger commitment, a partnership between the federal and provincial governments towards education.

1610

Mrs. Tuttle: All courses, whether they are offered in the regular or continuing education programs, must be delivered by certified teachers. The unfortunate reality, however, is that the current teacher shortage will become even more acute in an expanded school system.

There is no shortage, however, in the number of applicants to the faculties of education. Over 15,000 candidates applied to the faculty of education at the University of Toronto for admission in 1988-89 and 1989-90. Under current funding arrangements, only 1,850 could be accepted; over 13,000 candidates have been turned away in two years. Increased funding must be made available for teacher education so that, in turn, our education system can be expanded to better serve all citizens of Ontario.

It may be appropriate to establish, and now I am referring to some concerns we have about teacher contracts, a university model whereby a teacher is hired to teach a certain number of classes each year, whether day, evening or summer classes. However, a teacher's preference should be honoured when teaching assignments are determined. This flexible timetabling option would provide an excellent opportunity for business teachers to return to the business environment for extended periods of professional development. This flexibility may also reduce the necessity for teachers to cross over into subject disciplines in which they are less qualified.

These issues alone, and they are but a few, illustrate the complex ramifications of extending the school day and/or the school year. It may be wise for the Ministry of Education to initiate, in consultation–may I underline–with all affected parties, board of education pilot projects in several locations across the province. This experiment permits a close study of the impact on all aspects of the school system.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is the end of our written submission. I would certainly welcome any of your questions at this point.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the brief. It made very interesting points. I especially like your focus on the growing number of older people who will be returning to the system, as we are seeing by the evidence of your appendices. I indicate, though, that I think you make it sound like they are going to be growing and the numbers of young people are going to be dropping, yet it looks like the latest statistics show that Ontario is going to be a growth area in terms of young people entering the education system up to the turn of the century, at least at this stage. That phenomenon of more older people re-entering is going to be on top of an increased group, so the teacher shortage matters you raise, I think, are just expanded in terms of the difficulties we are likely to face.

I am not clear about a couple of the central things here, however. Although I understand the notion of expanding continuing education and

giving it more legitimacy and equal funding and therefore the notion of teachers moving into contracts that would allow them to opt into, as you say, a university-style approach–I am sure that is something that could be negotiated easily by the federations and boards if the money were there to allow the boards to treat those courses in that fashion–I do not understand whether or not you are saying that the school year or school day for a nonadult returning student at this stage at the secondary level, let's say, needs to be expanded from 185 days or a five-and-a-half-hour school day. I get the sense that you are talking about expanding the role of the school rather than the actual year of learning that might be there.

Mrs. Tuttle: If I could respond to that, yes, we are not particularly supportive, or should I say we are less supportive of the concept of a year-round model. As you have heard earlier today, we do see that there would be a good deal of disruption to family life. Deeply rooted family values in our society could be dramatically changed.

We are less supportive of extending the school year and more supportive of building flexibility into the school day, extending the school day. We are comfortable with the 185 instructional days that we have now but would hope to change the time. I believe it is legislated as eight o'clock in the morning till five o'clock at night. We would see that could more appropriately be altered.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I gather you are saying that those hours may be fine for the mandated student we have presently in the system, but to enable older people who are not presently mandated by the Education Act to receive education at this level, to enable them to come back into the system, hours allowing them to come in at four o'clock in the afternoon and take their courses through the evening might be more appropriate, etc.

Mr. Renner: Yes, that is exactly what we are looking at, re-entry of dropouts who are not necessarily, as you say, in the 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. day to pick up credits, coming in after work. We have even had discussions with a couple of people in continuing education who thought that running a course at 6:30 in the morning would be quite fine for people who are going on to work. They would take a course and then go on.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is no explaining the perversity that pervades our society at the moment.

Mr. Renner: Full teacher contracts might be made up by teaching full-time in one semester, and two night school credits and a summer school credit, which cannot be done now simply because the money is not there to support that.

Mrs. Cunningham: This is a most interesting brief. Are you aware of the number of persons in business education options across the province right now at the colleges of education? Do you know what that number looks like?

Mrs. Tuttle: Yes. I hesitate. I am here on behalf of the Ontario Business Education Association, but since I am teaching in the business studies department at the faculty of education, we are currently training 44 individuals in Toronto to enter the profession as business educators in September.

Mrs. Cunningham: You have 44 in the Toronto program.

Mrs. Tuttle: Yes.

Mrs. Cunningham: My thinking is that there are less than 200 across the province. That is what I have been told. Certainly, I know that is true in technical education. I just did not look up that other one. It does not say much, does it, for future planning?

Mrs. Tuttle: No.

Mrs. Cunningham: My other interest is on page 2. By the way, you are one of the few groups that has come to us and said you think we should be looking seriously at a change in the length of the school year. All of the others have mentioned this particular area as being one that ought to be treated in a more flexible way in the schools. They talked about co-operative education, in which, of course, business studies are a major component, and technical as well.

Do you know of any programs in Ontario where some of this co-operative education or community involvement is being stretched into the summers, where the business community is working with secondary schools to give opportunities or work experience as a result of being involved in the co-operative education program or actually as part of the co-operative education program? Are you aware that could be happening or is it happening?

Mr. Renner: Yes. There are co-operative education courses that are offered as part of summer school. I know it has occurred in Halton and other places. What has happened is that where the student comes in with a prerequisite, let's say, of marketing, he then in the summer applies that in the retailing industry or whatever and is supervised in that period of time. The student picks up a credit from summer school co-operative education.

There are unique programs where they are offered in malls. The credits are taught in the morning in the mall, in the office or the library or the auditorium of the mall, and in the afternoon the students go into the various retailers and do work.

1620

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I must tell the people at Scarborough Town Centre about this. That is a good way to deal with some of the problems we have had.

Mrs. Cunningham: It is. These are the kinds of examples. You refer to pilot projects. You ought to know my bias.

Mr. Renner: Yes.

Mrs. Cunningham: I think there are lots out there now that teachers have brought up themselves that meet the needs of students that we could use as examples. We do not have to have somebody write them up here in Queen's Park and subject the whole province of Ontario school boards to them at all. I think the teachers have already brought them up because they really do care about the students.

Here is an interesting one I had last week. I had a couple of students come and see me in my constituency office during the March break. They were wanting to get a head start on things. One was a grade 10 student. The other was in grade 11. They wanted more opportunities for learning computers than they were able to get in schools, because the hands-on time just was not good enough for them. They were both doing very well in their courses. They were wondering if they could take some courses in the summer and get some credits, and the answer was no, they could not do that. I think there was one extension course that one of them was eligible for, but basically there was not much.

Interestingly enough, if they had been employed in the workplace, they could have taken courses provided by private institutions if their employer allowed them time off work to do it. Two of their friends, who were 17 years old, were doing this because they had quit school.

They were with employers and the Ontario government, through the Ministry of Skills Development, was not only paying rent on the premises, but paying the instructors through a private agency. These are students who would have loved to have stayed in school to do it. Are you aware of those kinds of things at all? This was in Toronto, by the way.

Mr. Renner: I am not aware of the exact case that you talk about, but certainly there are times when obviously they want to focus on one particular aspect of the curriculum and they simply cannot get enough of it. There are not enough courses offered. They do require special training. There is a perfect opportunity for the Ministry of Skills Development to provide that, but I think the education system has to address the fact that more and more people want and need a diploma. I think these two can work in concert. They do not have to work in opposition to one another.

Mrs. Cunningham: Interestingly enough, their parents came with them, because both of them wanted to finish school and they were sharing their dilemma. I know other members have the same interesting appointments in their constituency offices. The interesting part about sitting on this committee was that I did think some groups would come and say, "We could do some of these courses outside of the regular school year." It is interesting to see. I am not a bit surprised that your group thinks that. I would expect the technical education people would be telling us the same thing.

Mind you, others are not. I think what they did say, though, is that there ought to be some flexibility within the timetable and that there were projects. I would encourage your group to implement these kinds of programs under the auspices of your school boards and get it right out across the province. You are quite right. You are going to have to have some kind of lobby to have the universities open up the teaching education numbers to people who are interested in both business and technical education, as well as to everyone else. But certainly if we are planning for the future, we do not have nearly enough people being trained.

Mr. Renner: There is just one thing I might mention. A new course that we have in the business studies curriculum, information processing, is extremely popular with adults coming back because they realize that this is the kind of course they need to be successful in business. We are having a very difficult time selling that concept to the students who are in grade 11 and grade 12 right now.

Mrs. Cunningham: Is this an Ontario academic course?

Mr. Renner: No. It is senior division.

Mrs. Cunningham: I am not surprised, because I think young people, not having had the experience and not knowing what the market is truly like–I am not a bit surprised. There is a matter of maturity, is there not, and taking a look

at who is getting the promotions in the workplace?

Mr. Renner: Right.

Mrs. Cunningham: I happen to agree with the Skills Development courses, by the way. I just think we should keep students in a traditional environment and still do those same kinds of things in a school setting where they can take advantage of the things I think young people are being gypped of, quite frankly, and that is the extracurricular kinds of things in their own peer groups. I think that is so important if we can keep them there where we still do have the time to treat them like young people and that is what they are.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank our presenters for their contribution to our committee. The select committee stands adjourned till 10:45 Thursday morning.

The committee adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
E-31	E-1684	2	25	thinking about pupils, thinking about young chil-
E-31	E-1684	2	29	think about adults at all. It is not their background. It

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Hansard
Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Length of School Day and School Year

Education Financing



First Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday, March 30, 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, March 30, 1989

The committee met at 11 a.m. in room 151.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR

EDUCATION FINANCING
(continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to the select committee on education. We apologize for the late start. We now have a representative from all three parties present, so we would be delighted to begin. We are now looking at the length and organization of the school day and the school year.

Our first presentation this morning will be from the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. Could you come forward, please. Welcome back to our committee. We certainly found your briefs in the two previous sessions very helpful. In fact, I am sure you noticed a number of our recommendations leaned very heavily on your presentation, so we are very much looking forward to your comments today. Could you begin by identifying yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

FEDERATION OF WOMEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS OF ONTARIO

Mrs. Penfold: Good morning. I am Helen Penfold, the president of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. I will be presenting the main part of the brief this morning. I have with me our first vice-president, Anne Wilson; our executive director, Joan Westcott, and our executive assistant, Marilyn Dickson.

Madam Chairman: Welcome. Begin whenever you are ready.

Mrs. Penfold: I assume you all have copies of the brief here this morning. The federation is very pleased to be able to come before the select committee once again. We really commend the government for exploring educational issues and we appreciate being able to have input into those discussions. However, I would like to say at the outset that it would be very helpful to our organization if we had perhaps a little bit more of a long-range picture about some of the issues that the committee will explore.

We find ourselves in a little bit of a time bind sometimes when we learn of the particular issue that you are going to be looking at, because we really do like to represent our members when we make a presentation to you. We do like to get together with them and hold discussions with the leadership and with members, to make sure that the views presented to you really do reflect their thinking. It would be helpful to us if we had more of a time line. Also, we feel that there are related issues to any one issue being presented. If we knew a subject was coming up at a future time, we would set it aside until then. If not, we feel it is important to include it in any particular brief that we are presenting.

I guess the first thing and the bottom line in our presentation, as far as the school day and the school year are concerned, is that we support anything that is of benefit to the children and the learning of the children. We would not support any proposal which impedes or does not contribute to student learning. I guess one of the things we are concerned about as far as the length of the school day is concerned, particularly in the primary grades and kindergarten, is that the school day reflect the development of the child and the fact that at that particular age children cannot be in school for as long a period of time as older children can be. We think that is really important.

We also think it is important that all teachers be treated fairly and consistently throughout the province as well as within any school board. Specifically, our members cannot support some schools within a board having a longer school day than other schools within the same board unless the teachers at that school receive some kind of appropriate compensation for their additional duty.

We feel that the select committee should clarify the function of the school within the context of the Ontario education system. Traditionally, schools have been viewed as the place where one goes to receive formal education. It does not occur to some people, some members of the public, that education takes place in a variety of areas. We know certainly that our members often take the children out of the school into the community—to various kinds of other institutions, to community facilities and to other kinds

of work-related places–to enhance their education. It is an important part of their education.

We realize that with the way society has changed today people are, for the most part, out in the workforce–all of the people, the mothers and the fathers of the children. With that concept comes the idea that something has to be done as far as the child is concerned throughout the whole day. We have some concerns about the fact that the school is being seen to have a custodial function as well as an educational function.

A long time ago, with our document called To Herald a Child, we acknowledged the fact that the school is a kind of community facility, but I think it is important to remember that the teachers are in charge of the education of the child during the school day and that other people are involved in child care or other kinds of custodial or community functions.

What has to happen is that there needs to be clearer lines drawn about who is in charge of which aspect. The teachers are in charge of the education. Teachers should be deployed to do what they are best educated to do, and that is to teach.

Moving on now into page 5, the actual school day, we know that for many years with traditional kinds of families, if there was ever really such a thing as a traditional family, children went off the school in the morning and started at nine o'clock, had recess, then had about a 90-minute lunch period when they walked home for lunch, had another recess in the afternoon and then went home. We know that has changed today. We know that a great number of children stay at school all day. They stay at school for lunch, so in a lot of cases it is not appropriate any more to have a 90-minute lunch period, and many schools have adjusted to that new reality.

Once again, we need to take into account the fact that teachers are employed to teach children and not to be custodians of children, so the whole idea of that custodial aspect needs to be thought about and clarified.

Once again, we make the point that teachers are educated professionals who are there to teach the children and that their resources and energy should be put into that arena. We realize that with the change in society, because teachers happen to be on site, often those additional duties have been put on to them, and probably that is not right.

Regulation 262 has increased the minimum length of daily instructional time from five hours including recesses to five hours excluding recesses. No doubt this is to accommodate the continued additional public demands and expectations placed on schools. At the same time, however, there should be limits as to how much more daily instructional time is appropriate for students and teachers. I reflect back again to what I said in the introduction, particularly about the length of the school day for young children.

In addition to the length of the actual instructional day for schoolchildren, we also have to consider the thousands of students in the provinces who are bused every day. We know of examples in some rural communities where children get on the bus very early in the morning, come to school, spend the day at school and then spend another great many minutes or sometimes even more than an hour on the school bus getting home. Young children are having to do that.

It appears that the reason is not necessarily the distance of their home from the school, but rather the setting up of the bus routes, the doubling up on some bus routes. We feel very strongly that the transportation of students should be, as much as possible, geared to helping the child have a good learning environment and that the learning environment comes first and the busing schedule comes second, not the other way around.

We are also concerned that in some boards–for example, the Toronto Board of Education–with the heritage language program being part of the regular school day, our teachers are put in a real dilemma about that. They support the concept of heritage languages for sure, but when children are out of the classroom for the heritage-language period of time, other children are in the classroom. We know that it is very difficult because parents who have their children off in the heritage-language class do not want their child missing something of real critical importance to the curriculum while they are out, yet the children who are in the classroom have to have that time as a real learning experience too.

1110

Our teachers are in a real dilemma. They want all of the time during the day to be a real benefit and learning experience to the child, but you cannot say that that part of time when the other children are out cannot be really relevant to the curriculum.

Some boards are suggesting that they will lengthen the instructional day in order to schedule preparation time or to accommodate the 40-minute lunch period for teachers. While these suggestions may reflect boards' bargaining tactics, it would not be fair to the students to have their day extended.

The ministry should carefully examine the 40-minute lunch period which it has legislated. Many teachers are being asked, for one reason or another, to give this time up voluntarily. Many teachers, for a variety of reasons, are complying with these requests. We feel that it is important for our teachers to have a 40-minute break away from responsibility for the children. It refreshes them and gives them a chance to come back in feeling a little bit better and ready to take on the task again.

Throughout the province and within many boards there are vast inequities in the noninstructional duties placed on teachers. We have some teachers who are teaching in several schools, for example–sometimes two schools, sometimes three–and they are having to use their own lunch periods for travel purposes. We do not think that that is fair. It creates a problem, too, when it comes to parent interview time. They cannot be in more than one school at a time. Sometimes the parent interviews are held at a particular time within the board and it makes it difficult for them. They want to do the best job that they can and they want to be able to communicate with parents.

We realize that working conditions should be negotiated with individual boards. However, at a time when students and teachers are faced with these additional time demands to accommodate administrative details, the ministry should regulate the maximum length of the instructional day. This is one of our recommendations to you.

We would urge the Ministry of Education to amend regulation 262, section 3(3), to state that, "The instructional school day for pupils of compulsory school age shall consist of not more than the five hours excluding recesses or scheduled intervals between classes and shall begin not earlier than 8 a.m. and end not later than 5 p.m., except with the approval of the minister."

For teachers, equity is key. They spend their entire careers promoting and demonstrating fairness with their students. It is ironic that boards are not prepared to guarantee this same fairness among teachers and among students.

Now I will go on to our comments about the school year.

In regulation 822, the ministry has defined the school year as having a minimum of 194 school days, of which up to nine may be professional activity days. The year is to begin on or after September 1 and end by June 30. Statutory holidays are designated and provision is made for the holiday on Thanksgiving or another designated day.

The regulation goes on to state that modifications are possible and outlines the procedures and time lines for boards in requesting modifications. But there is some problem within boards, with contiguous boards and so on sometimes having a different kind of time line.

Presumably, the length of the school year reflects the amount of time needed to teach the required program. Ideally, if one were setting up a new program, an appropriate curriculum would be developed and then the students would be required to attend the number of sessions to cover the curriculum. However, it is more probable that in Ontario schools the time to be in school was defined and then the course of study evolved which reflected the amount of time available.

In any event, it is reasonable to assume that during the whole curriculum review, development and implementation process, the existing curriculum reflects the amount of time available and at the same time is considered to be essential for specific courses. This being the case, the length of the school year should remain as it is if the existing curriculum is to be taught.

A few Ontario school boards are investigating different ways of extending the school year; for example, returning in mid-August, having a different kind of semester system and so on.

The reasons for extending or significantly altering the school year are really not clear to us. For example, we have heard boards say that maybe it will be a good idea to close the schools in January if they are in a particular snowbelt area or because of harsh winters. However, if that were done, I wonder if they would be prepared to make sure that all the schools were air-conditioned, because it is just not feasible to have our children in those kinds of hot accommodations trying to learn in July or August.

The last time we were before the select committee on education we certainly stated our views about the school day and the semestering system and that if a three-semester system was to be implemented, students should be discouraged from attending all three per year.

If changes in the school year are to be made, they should be appropriate for elementary as well as secondary students. Elementary and secondary students have different needs, and it is important that when decisions about the school year are made, neither group be adversely affected.

Also, we must remember that during the summer break which schools usually experience,

many of our teachers use that time. I am talking about thousands of teachers using that time to improve their own professional development by taking updating and upgrading courses. Some teachers are now expected to work in July after schools close or in August before they open. Others are expected to attend workshops during evenings or weekends. Many teachers frequently participate in professional development activities on their own time quite willingly: not only evenings and weekends, but also for several weeks during the summer. However, we feel it is quite different to do something voluntarily as opposed to having that requirement or that expectation placed upon one.

In determining the timing of the school year, it is important that optimum student learning be a prime consideration. During the school year, students and teachers need regular breaks away from the learning environment so they can come back refreshed and ready to tackle new learning challenges.

In setting the school year, boards must consider the needs of the local community. For example, the Department of National Defence schools have a three-week vacation at Christmas to coincide with the military schedule. In Moosonee, students begin school during the last week in August and then have a one-week vacation in October during goose-hunting season. In rural areas, students are still needed to work on the family farm during busy periods, which are not limited to July and August. Thus each school board should set a school year that will accommodate its local needs, and we support that idea.

In our climate, the hottest time of the year is from early June to mid-August. We feel it is inhumane to have our children in the elementary schools confined to classrooms at this time unless the schools are air-conditioned, because of course they simply cannot function productively.

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Some people have suggested that the summer vacation period should be shortened in order to reduce learning loss, particularly for students in special education or English-as-a-second-language classes. They believe this would significantly reduce the amount of time they spend reviewing material during the fall term.

However, our research shows us that the greatest learning loss occurs during the first two weeks and that it is minimal after that period. Thus, the summer vacation would have to be much shorter than its advocates indended, and surely everyone is entitled to at least a two-week vacation in the summertime. Second, because students learn at different rates, at the end of the school year they have achieved varying degrees of understanding. Regular and thorough reviews are helpful, even for students who have learned the material.

Before moving to change the summer vacation in any substantive way, boards and the ministry should pay close attention to existing research.

I now come to the idea about flexibility as far as holidays are concerned. We support the idea that there should be some consistency as far as that is concerned for contiguous boards, and within a board for secondary and elementary.

I remember as a classroom teacher having several parents say to me that those kinds of breaks that we have at school are seen to be some real quality family time for them. Families like to be able to get together during those breaks at Christmas and sometimes in March, and it is very disruptive to the family if one board, say in central Ontario, and another board in southern Ontario have different holidays and it prevents the families from getting together. It also prevents that for teachers who have children going to school in a different board than the one in which they are employed.

The holidays should occur at a regular time so that families can plan ahead.

It is essential that teachers and parents be represented on board committees if boards are considering any change in the school year. As the people most directly involved at the school level, both groups have valuable input.

Related to but different from the school year is the planning of professional activity days, which should be done by a different committee. Teachers should be responsible for the planning of their professional activity days and have the major input regarding the programs as well as the timing of the days. Research indicates that in order to have effective professional development, teachers must be at the centre of the decision-making process and must be involved with the goal-setting and planning and implementation and evaluation.

Many members of the public consider schools to be wasted resources because they are often empty during evenings, weekends and the summer months. As well, they see the expensive equipment, such as computers, sitting and not being used during these times.

However, in actual practice, the buildings are often used by teachers attending courses during evenings, Saturdays and in the summer months. As well as these so-called off hours, computer

equipment is often used for teacher professional development and teachers are often in the schools doing the planning and preparation for their students in classrooms.

Just as industry needs time for equipment maintenance or retooling, schools likewise need this time for maintenance. For pedagogical as well as health and safety reasons, students should not be required to concentrate on lessons when classrooms are being painted or the roof is being tarred or those kinds of things are happening.

Most boards offer summer school for students. However, the majority of them are credit or remedial courses. It is time to rethink the purpose of summer courses. For example, if boards offered more compensatory programs, the need for remedial courses would likely be significantly reduced. At the same time, students' self-concepts would be better if they successfully met the program expectations at the same time as their classmates.

Certainly schools could be used for a variety of noneducational purposes during evenings, weekends and summer months. Their facilities could be used for child care or for the enrichment programs for students. Also, community groups often use the schools for cultural and recreational activities.

Some of these other programs are the responsibility of other ministries. For example, recreation programs are funded by the provincial Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, and child care is funded by the provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services. If schools are to be used for these purposes, there is a need to co-ordinate the funding. With the additional use being put on the schools, with additional people and programs being in there, it should not be the Ministry of Education that is footing all of that bill. Whereas the other ministries traditionally did these things in other areas, then they should be contributing to the funding.

I have probably already covered adequately on the bottom of page 19 and the top of page 20 the idea about teachers using their summer time for taking courses and professional upgrading. Many teachers use that time at considerable cost and inconvenience to them and their families. In addition to that, they have travel and accommodation costs, and in many cases they also must pay for child care expenses. They have the loss of family time.

If a large block of time was no longer available, school boards would have to be receptive to providing significant teacher release time and ultimately to assuming a much larger share of the cost of teacher professional development.

Another possibility for summer school would be in learning a second language or additional languages, in an immersion setting. Enrichment programs are appropriate for summer schools. The Ministry of Education should indicate its support by providing adequate funding for these programs.

In conclusion, the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario firmly believes that the educational needs of the students must be the prime consideration when boards are making decisions about the school day and the school year.

Madam Chairman: Would any other members of the panel like to make comments before we go to questions?

I guess you have covered all the bases. Just before we do go to questions, I would make a comment on your initial statement about the need for a timetable. We certainly are sensitive to that concern. We do operate under a few limitations ourselves.

The first is that our original mandate, which was in February 1988, was for only a year. This was a mandate given to us by the Legislature. It makes it very difficult on our part to have a long-term plan when we are never all that sure that our second year is actually going to come into being.

The second, of course, is that we are very restricted in when we can meet. Select committees are different from our ordinary standing committees in that they can meet only when the House is not in session. Because we do not have a definitive timetable for when the House is in session, all sorts of things happen, such as this year when the House actually went on for several months longer than it was originally intended. We do apologize for that.

Our steering committee will be meeting to see if there is any way in which we can give you more advance notice or a longer time frame, but as I say, we may have to go back to the House leaders and ask them if we can have a further extension of our mandate so that we would be able to do that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We will do our best to tell you that in September we are going to meet on financing.

Madam Chairman: He pre-empted me. That is what I was going to say.

We have determined, through the perseverance of certain members of the committee, that our next topic will be financing. However, we have not yet met to decide what specific aspects

and when indeed our committee will be meeting. The ultimate decision as to when we will meet will be up to the House leaders. In view of the fact that much of the educational community is not available in July and August, we are going to try to ask for September-October hearings. We do hope that will fit in to your timetable in a more appropriate manner.

Anyway, we have several questioners.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you for the brief that you presented. Correct me if I am wrong, but I do kind of tend to feel you have used a very cautious approach in the issue, not unlike many other groups who have appeared before us, with a couple of exceptions where they have been very adamant in the statements they have made. I appreciate the fact that you have put student interest first in your reference to it.

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I guess this is really Mr. Johnston's question, but just in case he does not get around to it today, I wondered whether you have really looked on the pedagogical side of it. You keep saying that what should be done should be done for student interest. Have you looked at the system as it is in deciding why it is as it is, and would you change it as teachers if you had that opportunity?

As has been cited by many people, certainly there is very little sound pedagogical reason for the type of school year as you see it today. You cannot justify on any pedagogical basis the school year as currently organized.

There was a comment you made somewhere that it was probably set the way it is because of the amount of material you were going to teach. In essence, that is paraphrasing, but I do not think that is really true or justified. I think it was set that way, as we have all pretty well agreed by the agrarian-type society we had in Ontario; that dictated why we have the school year as it is. That was the time available and you then decided what would be taught and how much.

I am wondering though, since we have changed our society so dramatically, as teachers should we not be leading the battle to say that perhaps now we should be looking at total revision of the teaching process? I am just being the devil's advocate here and getting after you for being a little overcautious.

Mrs. Penfold: I will begin the answer and then perhaps some others will add as well.

I think we did, first of all, say that, yes, we realize with the agricultural kind of society that we had when schools were established in Ontario and compulsory education began that the school period was determined to assist that kind of society. Then programs and curriculum were developed within that kind of time frame. That is what we say in our brief.

But we also say that there is considerable research that tells us about the learning curves of children; about retention rates. We also know that it is important for people to have breaks or periods of time when they can consolidate information and come back to their learning refreshed. So I think there are some pedagogical reasons for setting up the school year the way we have it.

Mr. Keyes: If I can just go back to page 10 where you said, "Presumably the length of the school year reflects that amount of time needed to teach the required program." I just felt that was a bit of a false assumption; that really that is not why we have the school year the way it is. That was my point.

Ms. Dickson: By that, we did not mean that this in fact is how the school year has evolved. What we meant was, if we were to start from scratch and if we were to set up a whole new school year, that would be the logical way to do it. But that has not happened. We have a school year that has evolved.

Teachers and everybody involved with education have worked very hard to make that work, to work within the constraints that existed to develop curriculum that was appropriate for the child's needs and for the child's level of development. A good deal of time and effort has been spent in developing curriculum and refining it to the point it has now reached.

To now make major revisions merely for the sake of making changes would not be a good plan, I think. If there is good reason for changing the school year—and really we have not seen any indication as to why people are suggesting there be a change; we can only guess as to what some of those reasons may be; and until we really know it seems to not really be a good idea to start making major changes.

Mr. Keyes: I do not want to belabour it, but I guess the point would simply be that taking into account what we have said about the need for learning period, rest period and break period, surely the division we have put on the school system is not a very logical one. It could be better arranged, even if you wanted to go to any one of the many varieties such as the trimester system. Someone said that means one of the trimesters is too short. There are lots of ways of making them equal and exactly the same length throughout the school year; and perhaps that would accommodate many other areas instead of such an

extensive summer break. I think you could get around many of those.

I guess I am just saying that, as teachers, have you reviewed basically and checked with peer groups in the US as to their feelings and what they have found in the changing school year where they have altered it very significantly? There has been a fair amount of research done. Our staff has had a chance to attend and hear some of it and review some of it as well. I am sure you people have. Has your organization also put that in as a major study for the next year or so or not? I know one of the federations has.

Ms. Westcott: We have not conducted the intense kind of research study that perhaps you are suggesting. We certainly have talked to our members about what they are experiencing and what they see in regard to the curriculum that we believe is important for Ontario students. Our position at this point, as has been expressed, is that we have not come up with sufficient argument to support proposing changes at this point.

Mr. Keyes: I have several questions here, but in the interests of time–I think you said you have about four people, Madam Chairman, so I should not go on.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Keyes. We do have three more on the list: Mr. Johnston, Mrs. Cunningham and Mr. Beer.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would like to thank the group for appearing. There are a number of things I wanted to raise. One was that if we were going to discuss teachers' pensions next week do you think you could be ready?

Mrs. Penfold: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No, never mind. I had a feeling you might be prepared for that; I am not sure. That would be great fun, but I do not think that will be on the go.

I wanted to just raise a couple of things. One, as I read the document, and it is a bit like hagiography, the teacher as saint comes through a bit here, and I accept that at face value in terms of the motivations and the equity that is always promulgated by our teachers in our society, but I think it is fair to say that the system has not been succeeding for everyone. One of our major mandates for looking at the system is that. As you know, in our first report we looked at certain groups in society which have not done that well with our education system, etc.

I am coming to the view that looking at this particular organizational structure, that is the length of the day and the length of the year, is in fact a premature kind of investigation and that what we really need to look at are some of the other substantive issues. Mr. Turk from the Ontario Federation of Labour was talking to us yesterday about issues like streaming, funding and other kinds of things being more important for us to deal with at this stage, and maybe after that you make some adjustments in day and year, but there is not much that indicates that is going to make a significant difference in terms of the success of kids in the system. I get that sense from what you are saying as well. If you disagree, please say so; I do not mean to put words in your mouth.

Mrs. Penfold: We agree with that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Okay. I want to come to a matter which is underlying part of what you talk about as you start off in your discussion, and that has to do with the matter of instructional day and custodial responsibilities as the school system evolves.

I agree with what seems to be underlying what you are saying, which is that we really need to look at what those rules are and to be a little more definite about who should do what and what we are really expecting of the school and the particular professional, or quasi professional even, within the system. I wonder if we could pursue that a little bit, because it seems to me there are some presumptions about the custodial responsibility which I was not sure about as I read your report and listened to you this morning.

It seems to me there has always been a kind of custodial responsibility. From the beginning of the public school system, there has been an inherent role there. Whether it is looking after kids at recess or other kinds of functions, that has been part of the notion, and certainly the expectation of the society, getting the kids up to the age of 13 in the old days in the school was part of the new economy, part of the change in child labour legislation and there was a custodial function as well as an educational function and it has always been there.

When I read your report, it seems a little bit to me that you are saying the day care component, if I can put it that way, the child care component, is in fact custodial almost entirely.

I have a little difficulty with that, because that is the way I interpreted the language you were using, and again I do not want to put words in your mouth but we could have a discussion about this. Did you mean that, or how do you see that very new component of the system developing? It does not seem to me that it is entirely custodial at all and that we really need, as we define

"custodial" there, to be very clear about what we are talking about as well.

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Mrs. Penfold: First of all, I would like to go back to your point about how the custodial aspect has always been there. Indeed, it has changed. We mentioned how the school day for the child has changed. They used to come at 9 a.m., go home at lunch and that kind of thing. Additional expectations have now been placed on teachers to do lunch supervision and so on.

The learning of the child and the education of the child have also changed dramatically over the years. The amount of education that a teacher now has, the explosion in knowledge about how children learn and the kinds of things we should be doing in the classroom have indeed changed a great deal. What we are saying is that the teacher, as the professional, is responsible for the education of the child, and as we know more and more about how children learn, that is where we want to be putting our time, energy and resources.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would surely differentiate between instructional time and educational time. That is what I guess I am trying to focus in on.

Mrs. Penfold: Okay. On to your second point, which is about the child care aspect, our organization has always worked really closely with the early childhood education people and with day care and child care people. We have been parts of coalitions and have been very supportive of that group. We are saying that certainly within child care facilities there is more than a custodial function. What we are saying is for our group, for teachers, they should be responsible for the education of the child and not necessarily for custodial services outside their time for teaching.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess I am just not absolutely clear here. Maybe we can become clear. When Walter Pitman was here he wanted us to try to think more in these terms, about the instructional period, the actual classroom kind of notions of learning and separating that out from some of the other kinds of things, whether they be extracurricular sports activities, community involvement kind of projects or the kinds of stimulations and alternative methods of learning that can be developed from co-operative experiments in child care that take place.

I guess what I am trying to find out is whether you see the teacher becoming increasingly classroom-bound, because you also make some comments about those other kinds of realities, or whether you see the educational and instructional role of the teacher as being outside the classroom as well. I guess what I am coming to is that I am having difficulty knowing how we are going to start to define what is absolutely custodial and where the particular professional, the teacher in this case, should fit into some of the other kind of learning that kids are going to pick up outside that specific classroom instruction, the sequential learning, like math or something.

Mrs. Penfold: Ms. Westcott, would you help me out?

Ms. Westcott: Let me make a couple of comments. As you have indicated, we agree that there certainly is instruction that occurs outside the classroom. We know that our teachers find many opportunities for providing their program for their students by taking the students to locations other than the classroom itself, but we have to recognize that we are dealing with a wider spectrum of students as well. As additional students came into the school system who used to be in other facilities, for their care program mainly–some education, mainly care–as those students moved into the education setting we as teachers also started to work more closely, I believe, with people who are working with other agencies.

Those people have started to work within the school and be involved with the personnel from the school, just as child care has started to be located in the school. We support the location of the facilities there. We are just saying that all of those programs should not be the responsibility of the teacher nor should they be the responsibility totally of the Ministry of Education, unless the resources come to the Ministry of Education from the other ministries.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Accountability is there as well. Okay, I understand that a little bit better.

The other thing, though, is as we looked at this whole question of the role of the teacher, a fellow who was here with the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association the other day talked about his role changing at an alternative school here in Toronto where he was in fact doing an awful lot of supervision of mentors of kids in this particular school. His function–they are all teaching assistants, if you will, in a sense–was becoming much more one of supervising and providing support to the TAs than it was actually doing instruction. We have to recognize that the teacher's role is also evolving in all sorts of other directions as well.

I know other members want in at this point, but one thing you did not deal with, and nobody has dealt with it as we are dealing with the length of the school day or the school year, is homework and the way homework is unevenly used within our educational system across the province.

I use the example of my riding, where kids in the primary section are coming back with an hour and a bit of homework every day from one immersion school, and the school just down the street is giving no homework at all that I can determine up until about grade seven or grade eight. Those children who are given an hour or an hour and a half a night are actually picking up an extra day's instruction a week, if you will, at this stage. They have an extended school year already.

You did not address that issue in terms of that expectation of instruction, and the role of the parent and all that kind of thing in the instructional process as another sort of parateacher. I wonder if you would make some comments about that reality out there at the moment.

Mrs. Penfold: That is a really good question. It is true we did not address that in our brief, but we feel very strongly that any kinds of activities or homework that the child is assigned to do outside the instructional day needs to be a very integrated part of that program. We must keep in mind what is age appropriate for children.

Learning takes place in a variety of ways and in a lot of forms. Our federation has done a lot of work on active learning and learning through play. We have also done a lot of work with parents about how to enrich their children's learning through activities in the home. We have produced pamphlets and documents and all kinds of things on that. We have one called School House on the Road and so on.

That is what we see as being of real benefit to children, rather than any kind of separate assignment that is not a part of the program that the teacher is trying to have during the school day. And yes, we feel it is very appropriate to make sure that the age and stage development of the child is kept in mind.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is so unevenly applied across the province, within a board, within two schools within half a mile of each other in my riding. In one sense you are getting an expectation of some students that you are adding an extra 25 instructional school days' worth of information, if you will, to those children, and another group has the 185-day year that we are all expecting. It seems to me that when we look at the flexibility of the year that we have at the moment, we really should be looking at this question of homework and what its role is in the instructional day.

If you are talking about the busing issue, for instance, if you have a child who is busing for two or three hours a day, as I used to do in rural Ontario, and then is going home to do an hour and a half of homework, he is having a very substantially different, and stressful it seems to me, educational experience compared to that of a child who is going until 3:30 in the afternoon and has nothing to do for the rest of the evening. He or she may be the same age, taking the same kinds of courses in the same province, and yet his or her school year and day are much different phenomena than another child's.

Ms. Westcott: Could I just make a comment about that? I think we sometimes do not have a true picture of what actually is being expected of students when they leave school and before they get back the next day. Because it is our expectation that all of the children in the class will not be doing the same activity at the same time, we would not be supporting everyone within the class having the same homework assignment, nor would we expect that it would just be an assignment given for homework. So, we would not be proposing that it be there for the sake of homework.

I think, though, that when you look at what individual children might be expected to review or do for homework, you would get a different picture. I think we tend, and I think parents tend as well, to look at did the class get homework. I think the whole approach to how we deal with the program in the classroom is different from just assigning a homework assignment for every student.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One would hope, on an individualized program basis, that would be the case. I have no difficulty with that kind of differentiation within a class. My problem is that it often seems to be the principal's notion of what the value of homework is that then shows itself coming across a whole school. It has nothing to do with an individualized program at all, but a school will have a very different philosophy on homework from one down the street.

That is something I really question, because I do not think it has anything to do with individualized learning and that kind of differentiation at all, but has a very major structural change in terms of the school year and school day for certain kinds of kids who happen to luck into or luck out of a particular school, not to get our–

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Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston, I just hate to curtail this most stimulating line of questioning, but we are already eight minutes over time. Our next presenters are waiting very patiently and we still have two speakers left, Mrs. Cunningham and Mr. Beer.

I would just ask both Mrs. Cunningham and Mr. Beer if they could try to be brief as a courtesy to our presenters who are waiting.

Mr. Beer: We will do whatever you suggest.

Madam Chairman: Good, then we will now hear from the Kingston Area School to Employment Council–no, from Mrs. Cunningham.

Mrs. Cunningham: That was a most interesting presentation. Thank you.

I have a little concern about the statement on page 18. It is not really a concern, but I would like you to elaborate on it. You know this committee is looking at the school day and the school year. I have been asking questions about the kinds of programs that do take place in the summers. You were saying, "You'd better look at the purpose of them." I agree with you always that the curriculum is most important.

But there are students, you pointed out, in both remedial and credit courses and other ones in our secondary schools, quite frankly, who are working into co-operative work programs. I have been advised of the programs that go on with regard to career counselling. I suppose these are the kinds of programs that students cannot fit into the timetable or want for enrichment, or sometimes students are looking for extra support in the summers where schools across the province are providing assistance. I know a lot of it seems to be at the secondary level, but a lot more of it is at the elementary now, as well.

I wondered if you would speak to that since this looks like, on the surface, perhaps you are not in favour of those kinds of programs. I know that is not true, so would you like to sort of elaborate on what you would support seeing take place in the summers if we were to look at better use of our schools in the summer for educational purposes?

Mrs. Penfold: Yes. In fact, I would like to make the point that it came to our attention recently that the funding for enrichment programs in the elementary schools was going to be withdrawn. We are very distressed about that because we feel that that should be maintained. We do agree with those programs being offered during the summer.

The point that we are trying to make here is that it should not be seen that if a child is having difficulty in a certain area within the program during the school year, we should necessarily be waiting and saying, "Okay, that child can take a remedial program during the summer," but rather the remediation should be built into the school year itself.

Mrs. Cunningham: I guess I would like to elaborate just a little bit, then. You say that if there were more compensatory programs, "the need for remedial courses would likely be significantly reduced." Then your last statement was, "...successfully met the program expectations at the same time as their classmates."

I think that is true, but I think there is another place for a lot of these students. The reason I believe it is because they are asking for it. Their parents are asking for it and they are asking for it, especially students in the later elementary years, young people who all of a sudden realize that they may have learning problems and are very concerned about where they are going to fit in the world. I think there are more things we can do.

Ms. Dickson: What we are suggesting there is that where you anticipate there may be problem with students, for a number of reasons, if they come to summer school they should do a compensatory program before they get into the situation where they are failing or not being successful in school. So they do an enrichment kind of program, in a way something like the Head Start program, for example, that they have in the United States, where they get them up to that level before they get into a situation where they are not being successful.

Then when they go into the regular program with their peers they stand a much better chance of being successful and will not get the negative feelings about themselves that arise when they are not successful. So we should provide the program before, rather than after.

Mrs. Cunningham: I was just thinking of an adjunct to the whole thing–in the age group that I am thinking of, most of them have fairly good remedial education. They know where they fit in society and they are wanting to do some hands-on things. I think we are waiting until grade 11 and 12 for it. In grades 7 and 8 I think we could really do a good job of keeping students more interested. I am looking at the gap between grades 8 and 9.

But I agree with what you said and I will not take any more time because of the time limitations which are a reality here.

Ms. Wilson: May I just say, though, that in summer school, as in any other courses, we need to look at the individual child and the needs of the individual child. So often, I think, we are concerned with the expectations of the parents, but we need to be looking at the child.

Mrs. Cunningham: I agree. I think that is one of the problems in doing the same old thing. The same old curriculum offered in the summer after you have done it all year-round is just a waste of everybody's time, and I think that turning people on is not doing the same all over again. There are some people who know that no matter how many head starts with the same old approach there are, it just does more to discourage people–does it not?–at the end of the summer.

Ms. Wilson: What we need to do is build success for the child.

Mrs. Cunningham: I agree.

Ms. Wilson: My same comment would apply to the homework. We need to look at the individual child and what he needs, and also be aware of the parents' expectations.

Mrs. Cunningham: We need your group to keep saying this. You have been saying it for decades. Every once in a while, some of us forget, so thank you.

Mr. Beer: I will be very brief. Perhaps what I am really doing is just making a couple of comments. There were some other things which we might have gotten into, but we are late. Just to underline the point you made about teachers being involved in the process in terms of what may evolve in this area: I think that message has come through in a number of positions but has not been mentioned here to this point, but I think we have heard that. Clearly, whatever we may recommend or wherever this whole issue goes, there has to be the close involvement of teachers in whatever is elaborated. I think that message has come through loud and clear.

The other point I would like to underline–and I think this is the one that Richard made earlier–that has I think come to a lot of us both through our discussions here in committee and also in our visitations in our ridings, is this instructional, educational, custodial kind of function and the changing role of the school. One of the other presenters, and I forget who it was at the moment, suggested that perhaps one of the things that this committee might want to do at a later point is look at the curriculum; look at, I suppose, the changing role of the school in terms of these different functions. I think you have quite properly touched on it in terms of day care and other things that might more properly belong to the recreational area. I think that is something that perhaps is going to become important, because I think you are quite right in saying that the kinds of demands that are on teachers–perhaps particularly at the elementary level–are very different from what they were a number of years ago, and we must assess to what extent we have taken that into account.

That might be a useful way to explore a little more fully some of these points. As Richard said, having done that and a few other things, then one might have a better picture of how the school year might look in a different kind of model. Those remarks are more by way of commentary, but thank you for the brief.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Beer. I would like to thank the federation for your contribution to our committee today.

Now, our very patiently waiting and long-suffering group from the Kingston Area School to Employment Council: if you would come forward, please.

As you are getting settled, I will apologize once again for keeping you waiting. I know we are a full half-hour behind schedule at the moment. We hope it will not impede your 40-minute uninterrupted lunch hour. Once you are settled, if you would like to introduce yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard, and then begin whenever you are ready.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Madam Chair, especially when we are getting close to lunch, maybe we should try to stick to the schedule. What happens to groups when they come at noon is–two committee members have left. I have to leave in a couple of minutes. They have come all the way from Kingston. We had plenty of flexibility this morning. There was absolutely no reason to end up a half-hour behind.

Madam Chairman: Just to make a point: We started 15 minutes late because we did not have a representative from the Conservative caucus.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: The last group went an hour and a half.

Madam Chairman: We have tried to maintain some flexibility within the committee, and again we apologize because the last group went 15 minutes over. However, we would like to avail ourselves of the opportunity to ask these questions when they come to mind.

Welcome to our committee. Please begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

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KINGSTON AREA SCHOOL TO EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL

Mr. Merrin: Thank you. My name is Jay Merrin. I am the chairperson of the Kingston Area School to Employment Council.

Ms. Weir: Good morning. My name is Carole Weir and I am a member of the Kingston Area School to Employment Council and I also work with the Frontenac-Lennox and Addington County Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Ms. Dillon: Good morning. I am Mary Gayle Dillon. I am the managing director of the Kingston Area School to Employment Council.

Mr. Merrin: First, we apologize for not having a written submission, and we will give you an explanation for that in a minute.

Second, I would mention to you, for the research people, apparently there is right now on the Public Broadcasting Service in the United States–I think I saw part of the program Monday night and I gather there is another part coming this Monday night–a really excellent program on school-to-work transition. I do not know if you folks are aware of it, but I saw about half an hour of it and it really looks in good standing. I would suggest you maybe have a look at it.

Again, it is a pleasure for us to be here and have an opportunity to discuss the needs of students who go directly from school to work, especially with respect to the length of the school day and school year.

As you know, we are a community-based group. As a result, we received a wide range of views on today's subject. Until yesterday at breakfast we were uncertain whether the original submission that had been prepared was suitable for presentation today, and at breakfast yesterday we decided that it was not. We nevertheless decided to appear because we think it is important to share with you the substance of our deliberations. As a result of the process, as I have said, you do not have a written submission, but we trust you will appreciate our brief verbal report and our sincere intent to contribute to the important process of educational review, the success of which lies closely with our own organization's goals.

Having said that, we really felt compelled to present because we feel that a revolution must take place within the system if we are to see meaningful education reform. We believe that reform cannot happen without a thorough review of the length of the day and year to determine: (1) whether our system is delivering the best education for the dollars; (2) whether the current parameters of the school day and year in fact are suitable, given the needs of students and society.

We are concerned because we fear that pressures from various key interest groups and concerns over fiscal restraint will mean that meaningful reform or meaningful solutions to school reform will not be considered if it will affect these heretofore rather sacrosanct items, as opposed to a study which would recommend the best way to do things and then move forward.

Given these overriding concerns, we can only ask the government, as the signal-caller of policy and the public purse, to recognize the need to take a leadership role in determining society's needs and then to have the courage to make the changes necessary.

We only need to look at high provincial and federal deficits and rising health care costs, to name a few other things, plus a society that continually demands more, to recognize that our children of the future must be equipped as workers to compete in a global marketplace and to do so successfully if our society, as we enjoy it today, is to generate the prosperity required to support our system and standard of living. An educational system that provides students with quality learning and promotes the concept of healthy bodies and minds must be a goal.

It is with these concerns and objectives in mind that we ask the government of Ontario to review the current length of the school day and year in terms of school reform. While we recognize that the system is like a giant ocean liner and difficult to stop or turn, we urge you to review the length of the school day and year in light of–and we suggest that we are in–a crisis and can no longer wait for the ocean liner to stop; we must be willing to act now for improvement and reform and have the political courage to deal with the consequences.

I would now like to share with you some of our group's thoughts to support the conclusions that an unbiased study of the school year and day be a significant part of the evaluation to determine the areas of our educational process which would benefit by reform, and in turn benefit students.

Our first point is that we would suggest that unprecedented social change, for example in family structures, the economy, immigration and rapid growth in urban areas, has created needs which justify the review of the school day and year. As well, given society's needs for day care, the improved fitness of our children and higher expectations, the school day or, perhaps more important the educational system and its institu-

tions, can and must be used to accommodate a greater need than currently viewed.

As well, we believe that a move to accept this position would also create the momentum to bring the various ministries together in an effort to maximize resources and address many of the root problems which have been suggested in earlier submissions and which develop in the early years of a child's life.

Our second observation is that we would suggest that the Canadian workforce of the future will have to compete head on with children from other countries who are perhaps more competitive, have higher expectations and better skills and attitudes towards making a living; unless our current system changes. We believe that the shortness of the current school year and day contributes to a general lack of expectations on the part of educators and a difficult school-to-work transition. In fact, the length of time in class cannot help but limit the amount of knowledge gained.

In a recent survey of over 1,500 high school students in our county, 40 per cent indicated that they spent less than two hours per week on homework and only 14 per cent indicated that they spent more than seven hours per week. I am sure you would agree that those are not outcomes that would indicate an all-out, total, knock-'em-down, drag-'em-out effort to get educated.

In a nutshell, our high school students are in classes for about 170 days a year and about four and a half hours a day, and only 13 per cent in our county spend more than seven hours a week on homework. We cannot help but wonder if this does not establish an attitude and expectations about life and work which just will not fly in years to come, particularly in light of our country's need to start to compete with people power, not our traditional natural resources.

Our third point is that we would suggest that a renewed and important emphasis be placed on the significance of wellness and the importance to wellness that physical fitness plays, that these attitudes and habits should be encouraged and promoted within our educational system and that the pursuit of these goals become an integral part of an extended school day.

The positive impact of healthy bodies is being well documented in the workplace, and positive fitness habits would also have immeasurable benefits to our health care system, let alone huge benefits to the individuals themselves. These programs, particularly in elementary schools, could be established and play a key role in the expansion of the school day.

Next, we would recommend the rethinking of the school day and year to better accommodate the co-op education work experience. Business does not operate just between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., and many opportunities are lost because of our traditional narrow view of the school day and school year.

Our fifth point is that we would recommend the trimester system to better facilitate co-op experience and teacher learning opportunities, as well as many other adult opportunities, re-entry, etc.

Last, we would recommend the review of the methodology to ensure that teachers have the skills to successfully implement the change.

In conclusion, our group agrees with Radwanski when he states that our schools should be for the sole purpose of providing the best possible education for our children. Following this proposition, it then becomes clear to us, given our above observations and recommendations, that the reform of the education system to better prepare our young people must consider the length of the school day and year, and the educational system must be prepared to take bold steps that will be necessary to ensure that schools are for the sole purpose of providing the best education.

The old adage, "Work harder, not smarter," no longer applies. As we face global competition, constant and increasing demand on the public purse and increasing lifestyle expectations, we must work both harder and smarter if our society is to continue to enjoy our standard of living and enjoy future improvements, and these additional mindsets and expectations must be addressed in our educational system.

We recognize the brevity of our presentation but, perhaps most important, we wanted to convey our views that a sense of urgency must be developed in implementing school reform. Government must make the investment in education, must be willing to make tough decisions and must be willing to be bold. As employers, parents and educators, we want to express our alarm and we want to urge you as shapers of policy to get upset, to get more motivated than you have ever been about anything in your political life and to push for meaningful reform.

Business, countries, towns are merely collections of people and will only be a reflection of those people. In the strongest terms, we urge you to insist on every avenue being explored to effect reform. That is why we felt it was important to suggest to you in an overall sense that the school day and the school year do need to be reviewed if,

in fairness to the whole system, there is going to be some worthwhile reform. We were concerned that there would be too many pressures from the status quo to have it stay the same.

1210

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Merrin. You have certainly given a very eloquent testimonial against the status quo, so I am interested to hear the questions from members.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you all for coming now with your third presentation before the committee. My partner Mr. Mahoney wonders what impact I have on the chair and the schedulers here in that we have had Kingston represented by you three times. I said it is just the quality of the presentation. I must say that I think, from those we have heard to date–I missed a day, so I can be corrected–you have made the strongest presentation of any group that there needs to be a real review of the school year.

Most of them have said there is no basis on which to consider any revision, and why should we be wasting, literally, our time even looking at the concept of change to the school year and the school day? I heard that even this morning from people who preceded you. I want to congratulate you on being very frank and certainly catching the attention of many of us and those in the media who will probably be waiting outside for you to elaborate as to why you feel there needs to be a revolution–that was the word you used–in looking at the organization. Most have said we should be much more timid as we approach this issue and that we should not get too upset with it.

I also want to congratulate Gayle Dillon on her new appointment as executive director to this group. Just from listening to this morning's presentation, I think that the fact that as late as yesterday morning you would change the whole presentation you had written to give to us reflects more or less the sincerity or the depth to which you have looked at these issues. It will now all be recorded in Hansard for those who are not here and other groups to read, but it would have been quite nice to have us just reproduce it.

There are one or two questions that I will start off with. First, can I assume perhaps that one of the best results you could see from this committee, in contrast to what most people have said to us–which is to go through their thing and then quietly fade away–would be that we should be sure to highlight the need to really put out to the public a whole balanced paper on the types of revisions that could take place in the school year and the school day?

It has been my slight position since coming here that that would probably be one of the best things this committee could do, not to try and take a particular position at the moment, since so many say there is no reason for change, but to make Ontarians start thinking, maybe for the first time, that there are other methods of organizing the school year and school day to the advantage of society in general. If we could do some of that, that would serve a very useful function. Would you comment on that?

The other questions would be along the line of what impact you see, positively, on business and industry. Mr. Cooke has now left, but the labour people yesterday said that literally all persons in our society and industry have always been taking their holidays in the summer and that to try and disrupt that would totally throw out our whole industrial and business economy, literally. You do not seem to suggest that would do anything but enhance the relationship with schools. I thought immediately of co-operative education in the same sense. We do not let co-op function in the summertime. I thought it could have functioned extremely well if we had an entirely differently organized school year.

Second, what do you suggest, other than what I gather you have said is more or less just head on with those "interest groups" which are organized and have such an impact on the system at the moment? I am very interested, I have to add, to see Carole Weir sitting beside you this morning in the role she fulfils, as I have done in another one of those organized federations, to hear any comments you may have as well. I have left you with about three questions there.

Mr. Merrin: The first one is whether it would be disruptive to have school going 12 months of the year and in the summer. I do not think there is any question about that. For example, in our community-based group, one of the strong representations came from Canada Manpower in our area saying, "Please don't recommend that, because we're a tourist area and where would all these people get students for summer employment?" I do not think there is any question that there would be some disruption that way.

However, if you were going to a trimester system, it does not mean that you would not have a student or students who could not take the summer off. You may have students by whom businesses and industries could benefit by their being around in the winter. If you are in a ski resort area, it might be nice to have students who would work for you during that period of time.

So I think there is no question that there would be adjustments.

To some extent we are saying that our children are going to have to compete with children from other communities who put in a tougher school year in terms of the length of time, the hours and the commitment that is made to getting up to snuff. So we are looking at it from that point of view as well.

The second question–

Mr. Keyes: I was talking about the best results that you feel this committee could bring about.

Mr. Merrin: I think it would be wise to leave it open. I think there are more people in the community who are willing to consider those kinds of things. One of the reasons we were prompted to come today, and I will credit Carole Weir for this, was because she felt it was important that the committee got more of a community point of view rather than that of some of the traditional professionals who are always involved in education and who potentially have some vested interest. I do not know if that answers your question.

Mr. Keyes: All right. Then just how do you really feel we should deal with those particular vested interest groups? Just use government clout?

Mr. Merrin: I think you have to decide what is the right thing to do and do it.

Mr. Keyes: Right. What about the increased costs? Everyone who has spoken to us has suggested that we would find significantly increased costs from the standpoint of, one, maintenance of the facility; and two, you have much more wages to pay because of overtime in some instances and extra wages because of the increased length of time you are asking the professionals to function. Do you feel that you would not have had any time to look at whether the increased costs would be offset by the increased benefits? That has to be, surely, I would think from your business background, one of the things you would want to be sure was considered.

Mr. Merrin: I think that the business community is recognizing today that training is an investment. It appears to be a soft investment up front, but it just has to be made. I think that the same applies to our educational system; there is just no question in my mind that we have to make the investment.

I am active in our chamber of commerce. We have just finished a meeting with 13 different business and labour groups and the Frontenac County Board of Education, and I think there is strong sentiment that money invested in education is a good investment and you could sell it.

Mrs. Cunningham: I should start by saying that I know about this group and I think a lot of us were probably forwarded your annual report. I would like to congratulate you and I think that most of the time your sitting member and I agreed. I know we agree on this one. He has probably been great support, and so I would like to acknowledge that.

I do not look at the group which came yesterday, which was the Ontario Business Education Association, and your own group as being any kind of a special interest group at all. What we really need is a different way of including our students in the world of work than we have had in the past, and I think we have made great efforts.

I know I am on a bit of a kick here and it is probably because I have been on school boards and probably too because Mr. Keyes has been a principal. We are all concerned about students who are, more and more, telling us that the curriculum does not meet their needs. I guess the greatest embarrassment is the employers, who keep accusing us of not educating our students, not preparing them for the world of work. I think they are basically measuring how well we all write letters; and most of us here, of course, would not be employed if that was the basis of measurement; at least I would not.

At any rate, we have a project similar to this in London: we have the twinning. It is not quite, I do not think, as sophisticated by the outside community; it started with the school board itself.

1220

I think you have had some difficulty in getting this kind of thing going. I wonder if you could advise us, and perhaps the committee could make some observations on this in its recommendations, how you did get started in your community. You apply for grants. There is a way of getting this going, I know. Everything like this takes a bit of money. But how did you get started and what is your sort of end vision for where you would like to go?

Mr. Merrin: How much time do we have?

Basically, briefly, in 1984 in a think tank of the chamber of commerce, a number of the business people were expressing real concern about the skills attitudes students had. A group of business people met with a number of superintendents of education and educators in the commu-

nity and agreed that there was a problem and that something should be done.

A year or so later, they went to Hamilton and looked at its Industry-Education Council and said, "Let's get something like this going in Kingston." They put together a formal group, then with Hamilton and North York applied to Innovations and got about $350,000 to set up school-to-work transition programs, that would be evaluated, and if they worked would then be exported to other communities in Canada. That was the original foundation of our group.

Once the group got going, it developed lots of momentum. Everybody in the community said, "Yes, we need it and we should keep it," so the boards hopped on the bandwagon and funded us, along with training in business and industry funding as well as the Kingston District Chamber of Commerce. So we are alive and well and seeing lots of things to do. I guess the ultimate goal is to improve school-to-work transition; in other words, help those children, the 64 per cent who do not go beyond high school, to be able to come out and be better equipped to make a good living and a good life.

Mrs. Cunningham: Are the programs during school hours, after school hours, weekends, summers? Can you break it down for us how the programming takes place and when?

Ms. Weir: Perhaps I could just add that in looking at our commitment to make things better for students, we had to seriously consider who were the most effective change agents in this process. Up until now, we are evolving, changing and growing and we still consider ourselves in an infant stage. In this infancy, we chose to make the educators and the business community our primary targets, so our main programs have been for the adults in the community who are the closest to the students in the hope that they will be the most effective change agents.

Of course, as soon as we presented programs to teachers, they wanted programs for students, so the programs have been part of the students' curriculum during the day whenever the structure of the school has invited business community people to come in to meet with them.

At this point in time, in all the programs, the main target has been those effective change agents. Even with the adopt-a-school program, for example, it has been those two groups working together to then put the programs in place within their own schools.

I would just like to add, on your first question about how we got started, that we started because of a real commitment on the part of the education people in our community and the business and industry people that they were going to make things better for our students. Those beginning stages are not easy. I am an educator, and when I think back to sitting at those meetings, listening to our labour people and our business people tell the educators what should be happening in the school system, it was not easy. I have stayed.

Mrs. Cunningham: I think it is admirable that you have 10 parent advisory committees in the secondary schools that you are communicating with, that you have involved the parents.

I would like to spend more time, of course, and I will personally, on some of the co-operative work and on some of my interests in how we can meet the needs of apprentices in the province. I thank you very much for coming today and emphasizing again your important program, which ought to be a model for all communities, I think, across the province.

Mr. Miclash: I too would like to thank you for coming forward with your ideas. They are very unique. As a former educator myself, I know of the problems out there, but to hear a group such as yours, which is actually addressing some of the problems yours does, is kind of interesting for myself.

I am quite interested in the trimester system. You just touched on it. I am wondering what you are thinking of. Is it a trimester system that would fit the needs of the elementary and secondary students? Is it a trimester system at just one level? What type of year are you talking about and what time frames, breaks? Just in general, what are you referring to in a trimester system?

Ms. Weir: Our group has mainly been concerned with secondary school students, although we always address the importance of the elementary school years and would like to see significant changes there which, in turn, of course would enhance the secondary component of education. The reason I prefaced my remarks with that comment is that I think, in all honesty, we have mainly thought about a trimester system for secondary schools because of our adolescents and their needs and how we can best educate them.

When we think about a trimester system for elementary schoolchildren, it is with that social need in mind, which was well addressed before as far as the nurturing part of our education is concerned. That is very important in our elementary years; and is education, I do not want to put them as two. It could be that our society now needs elementary schoolchildren to be in school all year round; but our schools would not

remain the same, so I am not suggesting they will have the same kinds of activities.

What our community is telling us is that there is a need for flexibility in the school year. Parents have a need to vacation when they want to vacation. We have heard from our parents, contrary to a comment you heard previously, that a lot of people like a winter vacation now, and if they want it they go. We do not have too many people coming to the school saying, "Is it all right if we take our children out for two weeks?" We used to enjoy that luxury, but that does not seem to be part of our society right now. So while our focus has been on secondary schools as far as the needs of adolescents for trimestering are concerned, we have not totally discounted elementary school systems.

Mr. Miclash: That is very interesting. I think one of the problems that has been brought forward to the group is having two different schedules within the same board or the same system, having your secondary students on one schedule and your elementary students on another schedule. You have your children vacation at different times, making it very difficult for the family unit type of thing. I know what you are saying at the secondary level, but how can that sort of fit in to be a total, rounded school year for both panels, both levels?

Ms. Weir: If I could add just one more comment to that: we look at a different school year as offering greater flexibility, but we do not envision that it means you would vacation at different times. Rather, the curriculum would be offered in such a way that students may be out, but it does not mean it is going to affect their curriculum. The curriculum would be offered in units, as is already mentioned in OSIS, quarter units for so many hours. With a different school day and school year you would have different kinds of learning experiences; but we are definitely not suggesting they would be vacationing away at a certain point and miss something. No, it would be a total change.

1230

Mr. Miclash: I understand that. I am just saying that the co-ordination of the two panel levels would be very important. Thank you very much.

Ms. Weir: And maybe subjective.

Madam Chairman: A final question from Mr. Beer.

Mr. Beer: I will try to be brief again. I think one of the points, Ms. Weir, that you made was that as an educator, when you first joined the group or when it first had the discussions, suddenly here were business and labour people in a sense telling you what to do in your area of expertise.

As a committee, one of the things that has been very clear in terms of the presentations we have had is the need, on a much broader level, as we discuss the school day and the school year, to bring in more players, partly to break down both the resistance and the fear level, if you like, so that educators, business people, labour people, whatever the components in society, can sit down and look at these things. We should not be fearful of doing that and undoubtedly that will lead to some changes.

Perhaps the most important thing you said in your brief today is that if as a committee we can move along in creating greater flexibility within the system that would then more easily allow some of the things Mrs. Cunningham and others have suggested in their questioning as we have gone along, boards working with their local communities, and in Kingston with the organization that you have; that would then permit you to develop some of these different programs.

I do not think at this point we can sort of say from on high, as the province, "Thou shalt do it and it shall be done in this way." Clearly, in Kingston or London or Newmarket we may have different needs in how we approach that. To do that, it is imperative that we bring the trustees and the teachers' organizations into it, where they feel they are participating in a co-operative way.

I guess there is a sense sometimes, when outside organizations come in that somehow the educational system will now be structured so that it will only meet the needs of Alcan or whatever the local industry is. I know from your earlier presentation and our discussions that this is not what you mean. That is the part that may be our greatest role at this point. There are a lot of questions that have come up about, "How would you do it year long?" and, "What sorts of changes?" Clearly, I think we have to be careful. Even the American experience is rather limited.

But in your terms, as you look at the situation in Frontenac, are there some specific things you cannot do because of the way the system is worked out? Are there certain things you would like to see changed that would allow the school board greater flexibility with its programming? Do you feel it can do it, that it is a matter of working it out? I think maybe there are some changes in regulations or directives or what have you that would not tell people what they had to

do, but would allow them co-operatively to work out what they could do.

Ms. Weir: You are addressing that to me. First of all, I would like to go back to your first comment about the communication between education, business and industry.

Mr. Beer: And labour.

Ms. Weir: And labour, labour is important. I said how uncomfortable–I was thinking when you were making your comment to me that in actual fact at some points there is a sense of attack. But everybody was committed to students and our young people in our community, so as long as that commitment is there you work through those stages. You do stay at the table, and in an hour you can come to some consensus near the end. That goes on time and time again when we meet weekly. The commitment is there, and as long as the commitment is there it will work.

As far as whether local communities can put this in place is concerned, as an educator I immediately think of all the constraints that are on us right now. Perhaps the boards could work with the community, but we are looking at a long-term process. The support that is needed, from your point of view, is a direction. We need to be given certain kinds of direction; but with that, time to make those changes.

If we are given that certain sense of direction, along with the time, then of course the big question is resources. We know there are only limited resources, so how do you take from one to put into the other? I think a community could work together with its educators, but it needs some of those three components from this group. Maybe Jay Merrin would like to add to that.

Mr. Merrin: I think Carole Weir has really said it extremely well.

Mr. Beer: Thank you. I think you have answered my question very specifically.

Madam Chairman: I would again like to thank Kingston Area School to Employment Council for your very innovative and bold brief. I think it must be something in the air in Kingston, because I know the member for Kingston and The Islands (Mr. Keyes) has been talking about shaking up the status quo all week. I do not know if you two have been co-ordinating your thought processes, but definitely there is going to be a revolution in Kingston.

Mr. Keyes: Great minds think alike.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your contribution to our committee today.

Just before our committee adjourns for the 40-minute, lunch-hour break, I would like to go over this afternoon's schedule. At two o'clock we have a joint presentation by the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association and the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association. At 2:45 p.m. the committee will go in camera in order to give initial instructions to research on our report. At 3:30 p.m. we will move out of camera and go to the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. I would just like to confirm that at 2:45 p.m. the committee will be going in camera this afternoon.

Mr. Mahoney: Does that mean we will not be meeting tomorrow morning?

Madam Chairman: That means, consequently, we will not be meeting tomorrow morning as was previously scheduled.

Mr. Beer: Curious, is it not? When we go in camera we have to go out of camera, and when we go out of camera we go in camera.

Madam Chairman: Is that not strange? We like to be logical at least some of the time. The select committee on education stands recessed until two o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 12:37 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:10 p.m. in room 151.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to welcome you to this afternoon's edition of the select committee on education. We are looking at the length and organization of the school day and the school year. I am pleased to welcome as our first presenters today a joint brief from the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association and the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association. Come forward, please.

Welcome to our committee. If you would like to begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard, I would mention to you that we are being televised this afternoon, so you can race home tonight and see yourselves on the evening edition of our select committee. Please identify yourselves and then begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO SEPARATE SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

ONTARIO CATHOLIC SUPERVISORY OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Moseley-Williams: I will introduce the group, if that is sufficient. We would like to thank you on behalf of the trustees and the Catholic supervisory officers for the opportunity to again to come to the select committee with some of our concerns and opinions.

In our group today is Barbara Lynn, on my right, president of the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association. Beside her is Tom Reilly, executive director of the Catholic supervisory officers. On my left is Ernie Nyitrai, executive director of the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association. I am Betty Moseley-Williams and I am the first vice-president of the OSSTA and a trustee from the Nipissing District Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

The topics that we are to discuss today, the school day and the school year, are two aspects of education which appear to be merely mechanistic or superficial in nature, but really have profound social and educational implications. Our paper is going to be somewhat speculative in nature. We are going to raise more questions than we are going to give answers to because we think that is where this whole topic is.

We are going to treat the topics separately, except that there is some interaction between them and the obvious differences between the elementary and the secondary schools.

In the matter of the school day, our current situation as experienced by teachers and students comes from a combination of the regulations—and that is mostly regulation 262, which sets the parameters—and tradition. This tends to dictate what is included and what the actual beginning and ending times will be, the length of the instructional sessions and even the material that will be studied at the various times of the day.

In the pressures for change, we think the societal changes that are very evident in our society have created a demand for care for pupils such that we have to demand care earlier and later in the day and we are having to provide care in the middle of the day. These changes come with our societal changes.

There are several distinctly educational considerations which dictate the re-examination of the traditional day. More and more material or issues are being added to the curriculum, to the point where time to deal with them is at a premium. Just in the past few years, AIDS education, drugs, street-proofing and so on have had to be added, and they have to be added in the time that is allotted to the day.

The curriculum imperatives which have accumulated are placing very great pressure on the students and teachers. This is particularly true at the level of grades 7 and 8, where the panoply of required topics and choices to be integrated has been well described as a marathon. We think marathons are neither healthy nor acceptable for everyone.

The current trend to seek alternative methods of program delivery, especially at the secondary level, must also prompt re-examination of the day. These methods of delivery include co-op education, continuing and adult education, distance education with onsite tuition, independent study and a host of others. None of these fits neatly into the packaged school day which has been part of our tradition and still too often exerts control over our thinking.

Heritage language has impacted on the school day.

There is currently a tendency for students at the secondary level and in specialized programs, such as the gifted, to spend parts of a day in two different settings with travel time a necessity. The definition of their school day and what is to be included in it is problematical under current

practices. Even the current physical conditions in some schools cast shadows around what is grantable time for students. If a student has to dress to leave a portable, travel some distance to the main building and a classroom in it, the time has to be scheduled separately–travel time–in order that the grant can be obtained for full instructional time. The consequence, of course, is a lengthened school day.

In the organization of the day at the present time, it is standard practice to divide the day in secondary schools into standard blocks of time for the study of particular subjects. This organization is dictated by the measurement of a credit in the credit system. There are people who would submit that not all subjects require the same amount of time and that a time, say, 75 minutes, suitable for one subject may not be necessary or suitable for another.

With the emergence of preparation time at the elementary level, there appears to be a tendency to break up the day for elementary students, even in the primary division, so that preparation time for staff can be scheduled. We have no data on how this is being done. However, the trend is a cause of concern lest it may lead to a segmented or subject- or topic-driven day for young children.

On co-curricular activities, in many parts of the province, because of geography, a majority of the students are bused to school. These students cannot participate fully in all of the activities of the school just because of the transportation. Such arrangements have costs attached to them and in many cases they are considered extraordinary or not necessary. We think that all of the experiences in the school are necessary for the students and that the opportunity should be equal for all of them.

From the outline given above it is obviously timely, in our opinion, that the select committee open up this issue for discussion and study. The concept of study is most appropriate. We are very conscious that the impressions we are conveying are based on "soft" data. We do not feel that anyone is in a position at this time to be definitive about what changes are taking place or are required.

By a combination of private enterprise, parental initiative and board co-operation, the school day in many places includes before-school, after-school and lunchtime programs.

The following questions need to be answered. The next four points spell out the implications, the changes or extra services that would be required and who is going to be responsible for them. How are we going to guarantee or ensure that the service would be equitable to all the children? As I said, primarily we are asking questions.

The current definition of a credit, based on time in class, drives the organization of the school day at the secondary level. In view of this committee's own recommendation for reorganization of grade 9 and perhaps grade 10, in view of the multiplicity of delivery models and in view of the accommodation realities in schools, the definition of a credit needs to be re-examined. We would submit that the definition could consist of a combination of time on task–very flexible–and degree of mastery or skill development.

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At the moment, grants are tied strictly to time in class by students. The grant structure should be re-examined with a view to developing ways of taking into consideration such factors as necessary time taken by students to access programs, productive time spent by students on out-of-classroom monitored activities, credits earned by students, and individualized instruction given out of class. The grant structure could be made more imaginative and flexible without giving away control and fostering abuse.

We see the lengthening of hours during which schools are in business with the distinct possibility of spreading the instructional time over more hours of the day. The consequences of this would be that not all of the students would have the same day, they would not have the same instructional time, and their day would be perhaps more individualistic or it would answer more needs.

There are implications in the changing: differentiated staffing in schools, the collective agreement, teacher contracts, shift work for teachers, the workload and responsibilities of school administrators. For example, the duties of a principal and the duties of a teacher outlined in the Education Act and regulation 262 on the school day will need to be rewritten, in our view.

There are also implications with regard to pedagogy. The massive change in the province to semestered systems has correctly led to a plea by secondary school teachers for support, both professional and fiscal, in the re-examination of traditional methods of teaching, of learning and of evaluation. The impact of the potential changes alluded to above will require the allocation of resources to the rethinking of established methods of teaching and provision of learning materials.

Our recommendations are at the bottom of page 7. Our recommendations, I keep repeating, are raising more questions than answers, but I would like to review them with you.

Having opened up these areas for discussion, the select committee on education should commission research and establish what new factors are impinging on the school day across the province, with attention to crossovers from day schooling to night schooling for adult purposes.

Second, the results of such studies should be used as a basis for the serious discussion of useful changes in the regulations governing the school day.

The Ministry of Education should strike a task force of ministry personnel, teachers, trustees, parents and supervisory officers to discuss the implications of the changes taking place in the school day and their implications for costs, staffing, contracts and so on. Our two associations would, of course, welcome the opportunity to participate in such a proposal.

Ministry officials should be empowered to exercise direction in the application of the grant regulations to allow experimentation with different modes of program delivery and credit allocation through a recognized approval process.

I am finished that part of this presentation. I apologize if I read very quickly. I read in church and am inclined to get on track and go. The school year section is going to be presented by Barbara Lynn.

Miss Lynn: If I may, I would simply like to highlight some of the points that are enclosed in the brief that you have received and point out to you initially that I think some of the points that we will cover in talking about the school year we have talked about earlier on when we talked about semestering and the last time we visited the select committee. I will try to be brief in my highlighting, so that we can be involved in discussion following our presentation.

First of all, I would like to point out that we all know the present, traditional school year that we have was designed for an agriculturally based society and is out of step with the current era. We realize as well that there are many methods of program delivery, particularly co-operative education or use of technology in education, that really should not be restricted necessarily to the current 10-month school year that we offer to our public.

We truly do believe that educational services should be available when people want to use them, instead of on a fairly restricted basis.

We believe as well that if the premises we have suggested in the first section of the brief involving a longer school day become acceptable in Ontario, then one of its consequences may be a lengthened school year.

Currently we have a school year that is set at 198 instructional days. We question whether that is enough, and it is certainly not universally used. We would encourage the select committee to study the number of days and instructional time that are being used in a variety of countries and suggest to you that the 198 days would appear at this time to be at the low end of the acceptable range of the number of instructional days.

With our current organized school year, many of you will know, as parents and those of you who have friends who are in the profession, many of us have said for a long time that the summer break may be too long, particularly for those students who have learning difficulties. A two-month break for those students actually contributes more to the learning losses that occur.

Our traditional year begins after Labour Day and concludes at the end of June. We believe there is significant reason for examining that particular structure.

At the present time, most of our secondary schools, for one reason or another, have established a semestered system. With our current, traditional school year, this constitutes some problems with the actual time at which the end of semester falls. The first-semester break is at the end of January. This date is awkward because of the Christmas break and the fact that it does not coincide with college and university entry points.

We would also ask the committee to consider, based upon our 10-month school year, if we look at our weather pattern over the last number of years, whether or not the weather conditions in late June have tended to be less conducive to attendance at school and study than those in late August, which are often somewhat cooler days.

We would suggest, then, that the school year be reorganized so that the Christmas break becomes the centre point. The year then might begin in mid-August and end in mid-June. Such an arrangement should not be terribly disruptive to families. Indeed, summer programs would be earlier and therefore less disruptive to family plans.

We realize that the concept of an all-round school year is under study in many parts of North America. Particularly in San Diego, there is a study at the current time of a trimestered or an all-round school year. We would like more data

on the success and the study of that particular concept.

The logic of some of our previous arguments would lead in the direction of a longer school year or at least the opportunity for summer programs for all students who may wish to have them. There are certain advantages to that offering.

However, we would like to point out to you that in terms of management and organization and the provision of such programs, there are some disadvantages. If we make a determination to lengthen the school year or to have an all-round school year, many of our buildings would need to be air-conditioned. Students and teachers might be reluctant to volunteer for the summer session, if it is our presumption that we would have a trimestered school year and that teachers were expected to be there for all three of the trimesters. We would be concerned that coerced attendance in the summer might disrupt families and meet great resistance. So we would be looking for some options around the summer program as well.

Staffing, administrative and contract problems would multiply, and all of these considerations should be part of any study of a lengthened school year.

As a matter of fact, upon reflection, it is difficult to see what could be achieved by such an organization of the year which is not already available through the intelligent use of our current summer school provisions. We believe an expansion of the summer programs to meet identified needs is probably more feasible and acceptable than school all year round. For these reasons, the OSSTA and the OCSOA would not be in favour of the year-round school on the evidence that is available at this time, but we would encourage study.

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If I may, I would like to read the recommendations that we have noted for study of the school year.

a. We recommend that the goal be set of reorganizing the school year to centre on the Christmas break as the natural midyear break.

b. We encourage the select committee to make recommendations for the approval of pilot projects and to encourage the establishment of public awareness campaigns and to elicit the viewpoint of the public about preparing the community for any change in the school year.

c. We recommend that the grants and regulations be designed to encourage boards to provide summer programs for those requiring them.

d. Further, we recommend that the length and disposition of the school year, with its current professional activity days, remain basically unchanged until there is evidence that change is needed, based upon a more detailed study.

These are simply the recommendations that we make about the school year and, earlier, about the school day. We would be happy at this time to engage in some discussion and dialogue about these matters.

Madam Chairman: While the members are organizing their questions, I have one myself. I noticed in the section about semestering that you gave fairly positive feedback on the idea of going mid-August to mid-June. Yet yesterday your associates the Ontario Catholic Secondary School Principals' Association were very cool towards that idea because they felt it interfered with the Christmas holiday season and the spirituality that is so important in the separate school system.

I will quote what they said. "Sensitive to our mandate from Christian parents, we would greet with displeasure any move in this direction which would serve the cause of greater secular efficiency but possibly lead to a further erosion of the Christian feast of Christmas." They did go on from there.

I wonder if you would like to comment on how you would see changing the timing of the school year to accommodate the many semestered schools fitting into the Catholic philosophy.

Miss Lynn: I will comment myself and then invite our executive director to comment as well.

The response to that would depend upon exactly when we established that midyear break, that Christmas break, and how much prior to the celebration of the Christmas season we would be dismissing students for that break. It would be our expectation that if we are looking at a mid-August start, we are talking about a difference of two or three weeks from our current pattern. I believe we would still be involved in our schools in preparing children to think about and be very active in thinking about the Advent season, even if we did end the first semester earlier in December.

I will ask if Tom Reilly has a comment.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: To be fair, because the chairman did not say this, it was a matter of exams. In a full year, exams are often in November rather than later. They did not want exams pushed up next to Christmas because they felt that would get in the way of Advent and Christmas.

Mr. Reilly: That explains a lot to me, because I was wondering what the concept would be. The break would be no longer, but I guess there would be a pause in instruction for examinations. However, as it is in the end of the year entirely, usually the exams are over with and you are back into instruction while the papers are marked and given back and so on, and I do not really see that affecting it. You would be back into instruction and could continue the religion classes after exams are over.

Madam Chairman: So you do not see any problem in having exams in a semestered system if you began earlier, having exams at the end of November and then continuing on with regular instruction.

Mr. Reilly: I do not see it as a serious problem, no.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just to go a little bit further, another reason the principals made this point was that presently, of course, the exams come at the very end of a semester, in January. The real question was that since this would not be a full-year kind of content–we are talking semestering–to have your exams in November and then to have three weeks until Christmas, what would they be? Three weeks of the semester you have just taken your exams on, and therefore that would be played around with, I presume, by students, or would it somehow be an early beginning to a new semester which we are all now presuming would not start until January?

Mr. Reilly: Having been the principal of a secondary school, I just could not conceive of having exams in November when you have to go right to Christmas. I think we all have to dig in on things. I might see exams early in December and then back for six or seven instructional days before the Christmas break.

Maybe I should not say it, but I was always astonished when I came to this country. I thought I had come to heaven. Grade 13 disappeared in May; grade 12 disappeared in June. In the climate I came from, they all stayed right until the end and the exams were the last thing. It is what you are used to, I guess.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The fog did not clear off the heather until late June. That was the problem.

Mr. Reilly: That is right.

Miss Lynn: I think part of the thinking as well would be that the guidelines from the Ministry of Education on many of the subjects make recommendations around evaluation that would indicate that evaluation be ongoing throughout the term or the semester, so that experience of the final examination at the end of semester may be one of a whole series of evaluations.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It might have positive effects on the old kind of mindset that some teachers still have.

I have a few questions that came out of what you are talking about. I think your cautions are all ones which we have been hearing or have been sensing ourselves as we have been moving along.

One of the things I wanted to know was about the question that you raised of preparation time at the elementary panel. Can you give us a little idea at the moment of just exactly what is happening within your system around prep time in the elementary panel and expand a little bit about your concerns about how that may be breaking up the day? I was not exactly clear where you were going with that.

Mr. Reilly: At the present time, what is happening is that for the prep time, if an elementary teacher has 100 minutes to receive, then obviously other teachers are covering. In grade 1 we have a situation where, for example, there is no French break. French starts in grade 3, so some other teacher has to be scheduled to come into that class 20 minutes a day or whatever makes up the 100 minutes. What was a homogeneous day with one person for very young children is now tending to be broken up a bit.

Unless something radically different happens, another way of assigning that time, as the prep time grows a bit, and one can predict it will, is that the breaks will become more frequent. I think many people would be cautious about breaking up the day for, say, grades 1 and 2. We are getting towards a bit of a rotary situation in elementary schools.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How easy is it to get hold of information on that in some sort of quantifiable way in terms of statistics? Is that available in terms of what is happening in the primary section in particular?

Mr. Reilly: Within one system, it should not be too difficult to get hold of it. To get a survey of all the systems would take a bit of an effort from the ministry or someone with centrally located apparatus, but we could get it in our own system.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If you could look into that, that would be great. I notice the ministry official quivering, expecting that I was now going to make this request of him. Perhaps he could look into just how difficult that would be, but if we could ask you to get it for us, I think that would be interesting.

When we had our first meetings, we all had the impression, I think, that the rotary approach really started in the late elementary panel and was of course fully established within the secondary panel. We were in our transitional changes on streaming, etc., trying to get past that. Now you are basically telling us it is already backing back up into the primary section. I think we would be interested in knowing a little bit more about that.

Mr. Reilly: It is not an intentional rotary; it is one of those unintentional outcomes of a good idea. Because it is new, systems are struggling to put it in place at the moment, and I think this is one of the consequences. We need a lot of thinking around how you overcome that particular consequence.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other sort of statistical information I would be interested in is the question of how your system at the present time is using the summer, outside of remediation–forgetting that at the moment–but in terms of special kinds of programs that may be available for interested kids who do not want that full long summer off or, for one reason or another, for whom that is inconvenient. How much of that is happening in both panels? A fair amount happens in the secondary, I know, but is there a lot happening in the elementary panels along that line in most of your boards? How easy is it to get hold of that information?

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Miss Lynn: Again, the information for a single system is very easy to collect. We could send to you the program that we have advertised, at both the secondary and the elementary panels, to our communities, to our parents and to our schools. For many of us in separate schools the offering of credit programs in summer school is a reasonably new experience, so many of us are just beginning. We are in our first or second year of offering credit programs. We have been offering some summer programs for elementary students for the last few years, and some remedial programs. I think that data would be easy to get for individual boards, or maybe even some regional information would be easy to obtain.

Mr. Nyitrai: I think we might very well be able to get from our own files some feel for how extensive both the remedial and the credit courses that are offered during the summer are; more so at the secondary level, I would think. It would be easier to obtain it there than it might be at the elementary level, but if you would care to, let us know.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have heard of some examples at the elementary panels, some very interesting stuff: sign language courses, things like that for kids.

One of the things that is striking me more and more as we go through this is that there is a lot more information we have to know about what is being taught presently within our school system and the flexibility that is there within the year before we start to make any major adjustments in how we organize our year or day. That whole idea of how the summers are being used is something that I think would be of use to us.

Mr. Nyitrai: For much of the course offerings, as I understand it from being guided by people who talk with us, grants are made available for the offerings at the elementary and secondary school level. There is a contemplation of a change in that too, which will move very strongly towards a reassessment of whether indeed you would be able to offer both the extent and variety, and maybe entering into a mode of crossovers where you are offering some programs within the separate system, if you wish, that would be made available to both systems in a coterminous area and vice versa.

It may, in the long term, turn out to be more positive than that, but there is a reassessment that has to be undertaken at the moment because there is a change, as I understand it currently, in the grant regulations relating to the summer schools that is going to have an effect on the way we have operated in the past.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You got that information from the ministry about the grants for the summer schools?

The other thing I wanted to raise you did not raise, but a number of groups have raised it in this context and I have raised it now with several of the groups as it has come to my mind. That is the question of homework as part of the school day and the way that is interpreted so differently in different parts of a school area, let alone in terms of an entire board or whatever. I wonder if you have information on that.

We were just talking to the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario this morning. They are basically positing the notion that most of the homework is, hopefully, done on the basis of the individual educational program needs of a child and is not sort of a school-based philosophy. My experience in my own riding is somewhat different from that, in that it seems to really depend on the principal's and the staff's notion of the use of homework. You can get one school where, in the primary section, homework

is the norm, as much as an hour or an hour and a half a night; and in a school a block or two blocks away you have no homework at all, even up in grade 6 or 7.

I am wondering what information you can share with us in terms of the practices that are out there at the moment, because right now that obviously is having a major impact on the actual school day and school year of students in the province in terms of huge variations in the length of instruction, albeit with a parent in a quasi-teacher role and very different kinds of expectations.

Mr. Reilly: I think that varies almost classroom to classroom. Unless a principal takes an initiative to have a policy for the school, then we tend to get very patchy and differentiated use of homework from classroom to classroom. I know of very few boards that have any ongoing policy that covers the whole board on the use of homework. I do not think there is a systematic approach at all to it. We did discount it entirely in our presentation, probably because that is our mindset. We really do not count it as something we can allow for any more. I think the tradition has changed. Homework was a standard practice, but it is far from being a standard practice now.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: My problem with it at the moment is because it seems to be in a state of evolution. I thought it had practically disappeared and was kind of surprised when these parents came to me from this one immersion school with this enormous load that their little kids were having.

It says to me that in some cases we have got kids who are going to school, in effect, for over 200 days a year. Because of that, they are getting that much more instructional time than others. We have no idea of its efficacy. Again, a lot of people talked back and they talked about the philosophy of how you should incorporate homework in terms of reinforcement of what has been learned in the classroom.

It seems to me that before we go very far with this notion we really have to get some kind of a concept of where all that fits as well in terms of what a student's actual day is. Added to that is the busing time and other things that a lot of kids may have.

Miss Lynn: To support that variation that you have found in the presentations to the select committee, I think it is a good example of the opportunities that we have in this province for the principal and the school staff to deal with the local community and to make a determination based upon the parent community in that area, on whether or not homework becomes a formal part of the instructional day or not.

Mr. Nyitrai: I am sure that some would have also indicated that because of the scheduling, students in credit systems through the semestered schools do have periods off, free periods. Often many of the free periods would be used for what had traditionally been homework done at home.

Just as a separate case–this is a personal one too because it applies to my own child–my son, who is in high school, is receiving homework which is pre-lesson as opposed to post-lesson as had traditionally been the case, to allow a kind of learning or understanding that that individual would be able to pick up just by reading, trying to understand before it is taught. Now that is only being offered in one course; and I am not sure how successful it is, looking at him anyway.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one final thing, if I might, on this matter: It seems to me there are many variations on it in terms of pedagogical theory. There is also the notion posited by some people that we should be looking at different length in school days for different ages. If they are very young in our school system, they should not necessarily be there as long, in a structural sense, as others. Yet here I have grade 2 kids with an hour's homework on top of their five-and-a-half-hour day.

I am saying that it is good to have some local autonomy, especially if that is reflecting the parents' views, but the parents, as well as the kids, are a little astonished at what is happening to them in this particular case. I just worry a little bit about the consistency in the pedagogical backdrop to this notion of homework; and then again the presumptions of time and instruction that should be there. I would be interested in anything that you can gather for us. I think we are having difficulty getting a real sense of what is happening out there on that matter.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We have two questioners and approximately five minutes left. Mr. Beer, followed by Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Beer: I have just one question. As we move through the various presentations, I think your presentation is very much in line with many others in the sense of asking a lot of questions and really underlining the fact that we do not know a great deal about this subject. I think that would reflect the committee members as well. The farther we go, perhaps the more questions we have.

I am wondering if what you are saying in part, and what others have been saying, is that clearly

we are not exactly certain how we want to structure this, but there is a sense that the school year and the school day could be looked at differently; at the very least there is a need for flexibility. Perhaps one of the problems right now is the extent to which boards, working with the teachers and parents and students, can find more flexibility in current regulations, legislation and whatever it may be that might then allow you to experiment, to try some different approaches and to say, "We're going to look at the current year and try to have Christmas as a target; what do we have to do?"

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When we look at a number of the other kinds of programs that people are wanting to develop–more co-operative education and the various work-and-school programs–one can think of a lot of ways in which certain kinds of summer learning might fit in very well with that. In that context, the issue then is not so much whether we are going to move to year-round education, but rather to look more at the flexibility that exists for school boards to develop optional kinds of programs. I realize there are some problems there because if you have 60 boards you are going to have 60 totally different programs and clearly there could be a difficulty there.

But do you see from your practice that there is something that perhaps we should be looking at in terms of inhibitions of the boards that do not allow them to be as flexible as they might like to be in dealing with some of these issues that might have the effect of changing the year-round system, although it would not necessarily mean that kids would be going to school year-round? It would just be giving you more flexibility. Or do you feel you could do whatever you had to do in this regard under existing regulations and legislation?

Mr. Reilly: I could respond to that. I think you are right. I think there is a lot of flexibility in this system. There needs to be a method of accessing it. We used to have, if you wanted an experimental course in secondary school, a process whereby you submitted it to the ministry with a pretty clear assurance that you would have approval if you followed the guideline. I think a kind of process that would let them try something new that people could access without having to run and lobby everybody would be helpful.

The other thing I think would be helpful is to assign responsibilities more clearly. I get into the area of child care, which I know has been a favourite one with this committee. It seems to me that as time goes on, it is becoming fuzzier rather than clearer, especially in the minds of the public, because the new child care centres are attached to the school but not really of the school; the Ministry of Education does not really fund them, someone else does. I think clear assignment of responsibility for that longer day, if that comes as a social necessity, would help.

Mr. Nyitrai: If I may just add one point. If indeed, between two coterminous school boards they had different school years and a different ending at the semester allowing wide-open flexibility, that would eat very much into the ability of the boards to enter into crossover-type programs and to have that kind of specialty that may not be currently offered, to have ability for it to be offered within a system. I think you would be frustrating that. So at least from the perspective of the two boards, there needs to be some consistency as to the year-end.

Mr. Mahoney: I am getting advice and assistance and it is just wonderful to see the spirit of co-operation on this committee. I am just delighted.

In any event, thank you very much for the presentation. I think it is interesting that you are stressing alternative methods of program delivery as opposed to–if I read a little bit of it and a little bit between the lines–really the extension of the day or the extension of the year, which is not necessarily the solution to better education for the kids. Rather it is the way we teach them; not only the teaching methods but perhaps the time of each course. Would you see different students having different times on different courses? Could it go to that extreme?

Miss Lynn: I guess ideally it would be wonderful if we could say that we had a wide range of program offerings and some way we could accommodate the scheduling to suit the student needs, the family needs and the institution needs, if that is what we want to call it. I think it should be more acceptable that we have people with different timetables and different instructional schedules throughout that 12-month period.

Mr. Mahoney: It would almost be like life, would it not?

Miss Lynn: Lifelong learning.

Mr. Mahoney: Yes. I just wonder at the danger–and I almost ask this rhetorically–of breaking it down so much that you lose the structure. You recommend on page 11, "That the grants and regulations be designed to encourage boards to provide summer programs for those requiring them." Again, if you sort of extrapolate

from that and say that it should provide for different times for different students for different courses, different times of the year, remediation versus continuing learning, are you talking about programs that would even take it out into the community, the expansion of the co-op programs into the summer and make that part of education?

Miss Lynn: Yes. That was a point that we made earlier in the brief about the school year. We felt that perhaps the fact that our school year ends in June–and for some of our secondary school students early in June–co-operative education programs could be continuing throughout July and August. The arrangements with business and industry can continue through those two months. We would like to see that time expanded for the benefit of students.

Mr. Mahoney: Is it your philosophy to extend opportunities for credits to be obtained during the summer months and therefore perhaps keep more kids in school? Is that where you are going?

Miss Lynn: That certainly would be my philosophy. We would support that.

Mr. Mahoney: Good. Thanks very much.

Mr. Reilly: Also, just to add to that, I think there are many students with special needs where the programs really ought to be continued through the summer, such as hearing-impaired students. There is no reason to say that they do not need tuition right through to the extent that they care to partake of it in the family, and the same with retarded students and so on.

Mr. Mahoney: Your concept would still allow for at least a feeling of a break.

Mr. Reilly: Oh, yes.

Mr. Mahoney: It would be an alternative learning experience.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: An illusion.

Mr. Mahoney: Which is an illusion, that is right, "We're not really here." Yes; I love it.

Interjections.

Mrs. O'Neill: Madam Chairman, my question was a supplementary.

Mr. Reilly: The break may be the rest of the year; you could relax during the winter and gear up for the summer.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. O'Neill now assures me that her question was actually a supplementary to Mr. Mahoney's. We are going to watch this very closely.

Mr. Mahoney: Consensus can be so easy in this committee.

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes, because I wondered, and you now have given me a little bit of education, what students you feel really need some summer stimulation or acceleration or remediation or whatever. I guess my only underlying question now is, do you see more need for that in secondary than you do in elementary or do you think it goes across the whole spectrum of the continuum from K to 13 for summer school, or whatever we are calling that?

Mr. Reilly: Personally, I would think it goes right across the whole spectrum and I think summer school has been largely geared to credits or making up credits for secondary school students in the summer. Many boards are experimenting with intelligent and attractive programs in the summer, which really are a change, for students who need the stimulation.

Mrs. O'Neill: Because your association goes across the whole of the gamut, I am also wondering if you have a reading about whether there is more need for those in more isolated, rural communities, city communities; or have you done any kind of study about the boards and how they are responding regarding their own community structure or needs?

Mr. Reilly: I have not done a study, but having taught in Muskoka and in areas like Dufferin-Peel and Mississauga-Brampton, obviously there is far more in the way of resources, recreation departments and all kinds of things available in the urban areas. I know they have deficits, but they have much more in the way of programming and stimulation than there are in the rural areas. It would be a pity if the rural areas did not get a fair crack.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you think the needs for extra time within the school, whatever that be called, is as great or greater in the rural parts of this province?

Mr. Reilly: It would be as great, yes.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for your three supplementary questions. Now, in fairness to Mrs. Cunningham, who asked some time ago if she could ask a very brief question; and she is just going to be very brief because we are again running late.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: String it out.

1500

Mrs. Cunningham: No, I cannot. The member for Lincoln (Mr. Pelissero) will laugh at me. He is already doing so.

Thanks. It is wonderful to see the two groups presenting today and it is good to see old friends. I think you have been so helpful. It is exactly

what the committee is looking for, positive ideas. You have just been so positive. I think it is great. I wanted to say that.

Two points that you made, Mr. Reilly: You, or perhaps someone else, talked about the need for the same school year, as far as possible, for the coterminous school boards, and I agree with that. That is something we should probably be underlining as far as possible because of the sharing. Then you talked about the clear designation of responsibilities for child care. That one has come out before, and I think we should be looking at that.

The one I did not quite understand, you said it rather quickly, was that it used to be easier to get the experimental or innovative programs almost upon request. Now you are saying it takes a fairly heavy–I think you used the word "lobby," which we understand from time to time. You imply it is more difficult now; I would think it should be simpler.

Mr. Reilly: I was talking about the secondary school courses.

Mrs. Cunningham: Yes, exactly.

Mr. Reilly: Under OSIS, it became much more difficult to have them approved than under HS-1. That was a change. It moved away from experimental courses.

Mrs. Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Reilly: But I thought the process for that was good, it was helpful. I would see the same kind of process being available to boards that wanted to change their school year. I do not think boards should just change it willy-nilly, but there could be a process where they would put in a plan and there would be a definite way in which that was dealt with and then they would get an answer. I think it would be helpful if they had that mechanism in place.

Mrs. Cunningham: Were you also saying that some of the experimental programs, for instance, that are going on in the province now; and I am especially interested in co-operative education where the students have an opportunity to work with industry and the business community. If they were to go on in the summer, would that be a difficult one to get approval for? Is it more difficult now?

Mr. Reilly: No. Co-operative education, for example, is not experimental. I do not think it would be difficult to get approval for that in the summer.

Mrs. Cunningham: And the others? What we are wanting to do is help you in your work through this committee, if we all agree and if there are some problems. I think Mr. Mahoney was getting at some of it on that recommendation on page 11 with the grants and regulations. You might send us, as a result of today, some examples of Part c of the recommendation on page 11 so that we could be specific in our report.

Mr. Reilly: Okay.

Mrs. Cunningham: Thank you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just want to make sure I understand the experimental programs appropriately. I think when Tom Symons was here in the last session he talked about a number of the private schools, which had a lot of experimental programs–he used examples of international studies kind of programs–having to drop them because of OSIS. You are saying those kinds of options in a summer program are now much more difficult to get funding for.

Mr. Reilly: It is now more difficult to have them approved by the ministry.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you saying there are fewer approvals of that kind of thing or it is a longer process? What are you really saying about that?

Mr. Reilly: My experience is that there are fewer of those experimental courses in existence now than there were under HS-1. The main point is not to get into that so much as to say that the previous approval process was clear, documented, and you could see the end of it. Supposing a school board wanted to go right through the year, if the mechanism was in place for them to apply to do that, if they knew the stages they had to go through and they knew what the parameters were, that would be helpful. You would get things happening that you could then examine.

Madam Chairman: I would very much like to thank the trustees' association and the supervisory officers' association for your very interesting and helpful contribution to our committee today. We very much appreciate it. Thank you for coming.

As per usual, we are running slightly behind time. For the next 25 minutes or so we shall go in camera. The select committee shall stand recessed for public participation till 3:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as we can get the–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: On a point of order, Madam Chairman: What do the translators do while we are in camera? Will they have to take a break?

Madam Chairman: They will have to take a break. They will get at least 25 minutes' uninterrupted break.

The committee continued in camera at 3:05 p.m.

1535

Madam Chairman: We will now reconvene the select committee on education as we continue to hear from our presenters on the issue of the length and organization of the school day and the school year. I am very pleased to welcome this afternoon the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. We are pleased to have you back with us. I notice that your brief has very comprehensive background information, and it certainly is very helpful. We are looking forward to hearing your comments today. Just begin by introducing yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard and begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Cooney: I am Jim Cooney and I am the past-president of OECTA. I am delighted to appear on behalf of the president, Eileen Lennon, who is unable to be with us today. Joining me today are, on my right, the general secretary, Father Frank Kavanagh, and on my left, Dr. Robert Dixon, an OECTA member and a researcher for OECTA for many years.

First, I want to congratulate you, Madam Chairman and the committee, for the excellent first report. It has been widely read and well received by the educational community and especially by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. We have studied it and find that many of the conclusions you make indeed receive broad general support from OECTA and from OECTA members. Certainly, we look forward to the implementation of many aspects of the report.

We believe you do indeed have copies of the brief on the issue of the school year and the school day. We believe it is an extensively researched document that I trust will be of some benefit to the committee. But I would like to tell you that while the issue of the organization of the school year and the length of the school day is of some interest to OECTA members, the interest is limited.

I want to tell you that I have just come through our annual general meeting. That is a representative sampling of over 700 delegates, about two per cent of our total membership. Over the course of three and a half days of deliberations, I did not hear the issue of the school year or the school day raised once. It was not raised in discussion, it was not raised in debate, it was not raised in the corridors and it was not raised in the assembly room itself, so I think it is fair to conclude that the school year and the school day are not a burning issue for OECTA members.

Apart from the issue that will take many of us to Hamilton this coming weekend, the issue that consumed most of our attention at our annual general meeting was the issue of the reform of educational finance. That is the issue to which I will turn in a moment and the issue to which I will devote most of my remarks this afternoon.

Madam Chairman: You are aware, of course, that the next mandate of the select committee on education will be on that very topic?

1540

Mr. Cooney: I am pleased to hear that. This afternoon, I guess, will be our preliminary remarks to you on the matter of educational finance. I do want to turn first to our brief.

You will see that the brief on the school year and school day, which has many recommendations on page 23, is backed by much research. We hope it will be useful as you raise the issue in your report. On page 23 of the brief, you will see that we recommend that the principal rationale for any modification to the school year should be the educational benefits that would accrue to the students and that the ministry should fund a limited number of pilot projects with regard to this matter.

OECTA believes that the ministry should enable school boards to integrate the secondary school day, evening and summer programs with the necessary amendments to the Education Act and that the ministry should also address the issue of the salary differential that presently exists between day school and night and summer school.

We believe the ministry should meet with the Ontario Teachers' Federation and its affiliates prior to experimentation to consider the impact upon teacher contracts and collective agreements, and that discussions should also be held between school boards and branch affiliates on this matter.

We believe the ministry should reinstate funding for all-day kindergarten programs and that heritage language classes should be taught outside the regular school day.

Last, you will see that recommendation 7 is that we believe the regular school day should remain the same as currently stipulated in the acts and regulations.

If I could now turn to the issue of educational finance, which is an issue of much importance to

us, we are glad to hear that you will be devoting some time to this topic in the near future and we are glad that you will be making recommendations on this topic, which has been around for many years; from OECTA's point of view, the sooner the better.

As you know, the issue of educational finance subsumes many of the other issues that are of concern at the moment. I am talking about curriculum, the teacher shortage and the delivery of quality programs in the 1990s. So the issue of educational finance covers a very wide topic.

We have been awaiting for some years the government's determination with respect to the Macdonald commission. In the 1970s, we made recommendations to the Jackson commission and we were delighted with recommendation 100 from his report in 1978. I am sure you will all remember that recommendation said, "All industrial and commercial properties be assessed and taxed for school purposes directly by the province, and be exempted from school-related municipal taxation," and that "there be one school-related industrial-commercial rate for the province."

According to Jackson "the proceeds of this tax be applied solely to the support of elementary (separate and public) and secondary education in the province"–that was in the days before Bill 30–"as part of the equalization formula applicable to general legislative grants."

In 1985, we again made a presentation, to the Macdonald commission on educational finance. Some of the background reports that were prepared for that commission are interesting. Mr. Auld said statistical analysis suggests: "There is indeed need to reform the system of financing primary and secondary education in Ontario... pupils attending schools in lower income assessment districts where residential assessment is relatively high" compared to commercial assessment "are at a disadvantage. If equal education opportunity is to be guaranteed with similar tax burdens across the province, a new grant formula, incorporating differences in assessment mix and income, is required."

Mr. Atherton, in another background paper, wrote: "The problems of access to the property tax base experienced by urban separate school boards in practice can be considered as a problem of low assessment. There are many public school boards which do not have access to corporate or business property assessment."

I could commend many of the recommendations of the Macdonald commission to the committee and indeed to the government. Let me merely say that the goal of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, which is equal educational opportunity, is the same as that stated by the Macdonald commission: "In considering the options for funding education, we are guided by the ideal of equal educational opportunity, particularly the concept of a universally accessible education system without the payment of direct fees for all qualified residents."

The task then is to find the most appropriate balance between the province and school boards, and ultimately of course the most equitable distribution of the financial burden among the taxpayers in Ontario.

From the Macdonald commission to the Jackson commission, certainly I believe the evidence is overwhelming that we do not presently have that equitable distribution of the financial burden of education. For several years, the provincial share of educational finance has been falling as a percentage of total expenditures. As a consequence, the share derived from local tax revenue has risen. I am sure you are familiar with the figures from 1970 when the percentage was 51 per cent, to 1975 when it was 61 per cent, and to the present where it hovers around the 45 per cent or 46 per cent level.

This drop in provincial resources was particularly difficult for boards with a poor assessment base. Ideally, all school boards should have access to adequate revenue from both residential and commercial assessment. However, commercial assessment is very unevenly distributed across the province. It is obvious that commercial assessment is concentrated in urban areas. We see, for example, that the Metropolitan Toronto School Board has $417,000 of assessment per pupil, while Sault Ste. Marie has $185,000 and Algoma has $28,000 per pupil. If reliance is placed largely on local resources, you cannot have equal educational opportunity.

When it comes to coterminus boards, we often find examples of inequitable distribution. The Lincoln county area, for example, sees the Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board educating 25 per cent of the students, with access to six per cent of the commercial taxes and 15 per cent of the total local taxes. Look at the coterminus board: The Lincoln County Board of Education educates 75 per cent of the students and has access to 94 per cent of commercial taxes and 85 per cent of the total local taxes. For every dollar raised from commercial assessment by Lincoln separate, Lincoln public can raise $15 on an equal mill

rate. Therefore, you do not have equitable local support for education in Lincoln county.

All residents support, work for and contribute to local commercial establishments and help to produce commercial wealth. All students should derive equal benefits from that wealth.

Across the province, the pattern is the same. Commercial assessment is distributed very unevenly. In rural areas there is very little commercial assessment to share, so all rural boards tend to be assessment-poor.

Separate school boards have particular problems. They are prevented by law from having equitable access to commercial assessment because of two flaws in the Education Act. First with respect to partnerships; in partnerships no portion of commercial assessment can be directed to the separate school board unless all the partners are Roman Catholic and are separate school supporters. With regard to public companies, although public companies can direct part of their assessment to separate schools, they must prove very closely how many shares are held by separate school supporters. This is virtually impossible to do, with the result that very little such assessment is directed by public companies to separate school boards.

Typically, separate school boards will educate about 30 per cent of the students, will receive about 25 per cent to 30 per cent of residential assessment but will receive only about five per cent of commercial assessment.

1550

The government is on record in support of the reform of educational finance to address the present inequitable distribution of financial resources. The minister has already moved to implement some of the Macdonald commission recommendations.

We urge this committee to use its considerable influence as an all-party committee to recommend the following actions by the government in a timely and in an urgent way: (1) that the provincial government increase its contribution to educational finance; (2) that this additional money be directed to assessment-poor areas of the province; (3) that commercial assessment be more evenly distributed on the basis of separate/public enrolment.

I thank you for the opportunity to address you. I wish you well in your deliberations on the issue of the school year and school day. I hope you will be inspired to join, with recommendations on that important matter, recommendations on the issue of educational finance, and trust of course that the government will have the wisdom to implement the recommendations you make to it.

Madam Chairman: Would either of the other panelists like to make a comment before we go to questions?

Perhaps I could start with a comment. You expressed surprise at the particular mandate we have chosen at this time, the length and organization of the school day and school year. Perhaps I could clarify for you that this mandate stemmed from our previous hearings.

On many occasions, people talked to us about certain aspects that ended up being part of the school day and the school year. That does not mean people came and said, "Look, we have to change this." What they said was, first of all that there are problems with the semestering schedules created by the fact–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You shouldn't tease the bears.

Madam Chairman: I shouldn't tease the bears? I love to tease the bears.

They said there are problems created with the semestering schedules because of the fact that the organization of the current school year does not fit into two equal halves.

We heard quite a bit from teachers, parents and trustees–the whole gamut–about the crowded curriculum and that that is where the organization of the school day comes in. Third, we heard extensively about the fact that capital expansion has not kept up to need, particularly in the high growth areas, but in other areas of the province as well. So the committee felt it was very useful to look at some alternatives such as have gone into effect in the United States for a number of years.

I think there was a sound rationale for discussing this particular mandate at this time. It has far more wide-ranging implications than one would initially think when one looks at the topic. I just thought I would pass that to you for your consideration.

Mr. Cooney: We have had no quarrel with the committee decision to study the matter of the school year. I guess it is a question of priorities, that with us the priority for many years has been the reform of educational financing. We would wish that the committee would share our priority on that matter.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. The committee does share that priority as evidenced by the fact that it is going to be our next mandate. We will certainly be giving you details of that as soon as the steering committee has met to make

decisions and has shared that with the full committee.

Anyway, Mr. Johnston would like to start the questioning.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would like to start off with a secondary commentary and then move on to questions, because the chair is acting as if certain things were not public knowledge about problems this committee has had around our scheduling and as if there had not been a major disagreement about just why we are dealing with this matter instead of other matters like finance.

I will not get into the problems we had in terms of misunderstandings between the minister and ourselves about appropriate mandates for the committee over this period of time. But the reason we are going to be dealing with financing next is that a number of us have decided that no matter what the minister says he is going to do or not going to do, we wish to deal with that important matter and not be seen, as a number of groups have been saying to us, to be dealing with a matter of tertiary interest to them, or as you said, one that did not even come up at your annual meeting, in the hallways or anywhere.

I just felt that when the bears are teased, they have to rattle their cages and here I am.

I want to commend you for this brief. I did not think you would follow up that brief you gave us last time with anything of this quality. It was one of the best briefs we had ever had, the one on streaming that Dr. Bob was involved in researching. I know it has had a major impact on your own association in terms of its attitudes around that discussion and that issue and it had a major impact on this committee in terms of developing a rationale and an information base. You have matched it again with this brief. I think it is a superb effort and wonderfully well documented and laid out and that is very helpful to us.

I want to ask you a couple of very specific things. We have now had differences of opinion expressed within the Catholic school community. The other day the principals came before us and spoke very strongly against the changing of the semestering system as we have it now, moving the first semester back from a January completion and exams after Christmas, as we have it now, to a proposal which is out there these days to start in August and end before Christmas.

The principals spoke against it on the basis that they thought it would really detract from the celebration of Christmas within the school itself and the whole use of the advent in curriculum and in the schools. They did not want to see exams pushed up just before Christmas and take away from that attitude.

Today we had the trustees here, and some of the supervisory officers, and they basically saw no problem with that. In fact, they were suggesting that was kind of a logical switch to make Christmas the obvious break in the semesters instead.

At its annual meetings at any time, has OECTA taken a position on this or have you any comments you would like to share with us in terms of that obvious debate there is within your own school community?

Mr. Cooney: First of all, I want to thank you for your kind remarks. I am sure Dr. Dixon is very happy to hear the plaudits that you have bestowed on the brief. I will ask him if he would respond to the issue that you raised on the timing of the end of the first semester, and the timing of the beginning of the first semester, I guess, is tied with that. We have not taken a position on that, we have not studied the matter, but I would ask Bob if he would comment on the matter.

Dr. Dixon: As you know from our previous brief, what we have said is that there are very little data at all on the semestering system. Therefore, as a professional association, and speaking personally, I cannot really come out in favour of it or against it. There simply are not any data.

As for what you are talking about now, moving it around by a couple of weeks, the first semester ends about the middle of January and I gather they would like it backed up two weeks. I think perhaps you are hearing an administrative focus there. As a classroom teacher, I would regard it as a minor change, with this one caveat: It depends on how much emphasis the teacher puts on final examinations.

Some teachers have moved very much into regular testing and assignments all the way through. With a course of that nature, perhaps there would not be a problem, but for people who want some kind of finality, maybe to have that at the same time as you have a lot of liturgical activities and preparations and Christmas shopping going on, I can see the problem. Taking it and putting it inside of this, I think it would have to be subsumed by some kind of major idea or philosophy.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You deal a little bit in your report with disadvantaged kids and the questions of extended years in terms of special-ed kids and others. One of the rationales for the California experiments, especially in Los Angeles, has been inner-city schools and the

notion that in fact there could be greater assistance given to those children within a year-round kind of framework. Somebody used the example, as I recall, of Etobicoke inner-city, where he thought the summer was way too long for those kids and that a lot of them were just crying to get back into some kind of organized facility where they could participate in various kinds of activities, whether it was a straightforward, structured classroom or not.

1600

One of the things that keeps coming up for us is that dealing with the organization in a vacuum every year is a nonstarter. We really have to look at pedagogical reasons and maybe groups that might be served by this. I wonder if you would make some comments about–I know you have listed a number of options–whether you think the present system has enough flexibility to provide that kind of assistance, whether your system and your teachers are already participating in those kinds of activities during the summer in the schools for those particular kinds of groups or whether that is a really strong reason for looking at a change of the structure of the school year.

Mr. Cooney: Presently, many boards offer summer school programs and they are very well received by parent groups, especially of the trainable retarded and special education. There has been some doubt in our minds about what the regulations are going to say with respect to some aspects of the elementary summer program. We hope the regulations that will accompany Bill 70 will clarify that matter and will enable enrichment and remediation programs at the elementary level to continue. Bob is more familiar with the research that has been done in the United States with respect to special education and the retention of learning over the summer.

Dr. Dixon: As we move from the one plan, when they were faced with the baby boom after the First World War and the Second World War, to use buildings more efficiently, into pedagogical justifications which we are pushing, you get this idea that with two months' holidays there is a lot of learning forgotten. I think if you asked any teacher, off the top of his head he would tell you that the first couple weeks of school are spent in review, and sometimes, with some pupils, even more time than that. A lot of the research says that two months is a long time and there is a lot of forgetting.

Then you have that court case down in the United States that says, "Well, it's even worse for the slow learner." A number of those plans that you look at were structured to shorten the amount of time off.

My particular concern, particularly in connection with Bill 70, is this. In our attempt to help the slower learner, are you going to say, "All right, John and Judy, we're packing you off to summer school now and we hope you'll do well and come back here and be ready to be up to date with everybody else"? Unless you pay the teachers an equal amount of money and unless the boards take total ownership over those courses curriculum-wise and so on, which they are not doing now, it could be regarded by some students as a punishment rather than creative compensatory education. I am very ambivalent about this summer school thing.

I know the courts in the United States have spoken and I know the research says two months is a long time, but I would hope that maybe we would look at the whole spectrum of all the kids if we are saying two months is too long for the slow learner and the bright kid is doing some forgetting. You see my problem.

Bill 70 might compound the problem in that there will be grants at the elementary school level for only certain defined children going off to summer school.

Mrs. Cunningham: Thank you for an excellent brief. I am sure we will be carrying it around with us for ever, it is just so well done. It has a lot of history and a lot of practical questions that I think we should go through, one after the other, before we make any changes.

I am coming to the committee with a bit of a bias, and that is that I think we are able to use our facilities in the evenings and the summers. It is happening in many instances now. I cannot quite remember where I read it, but you said, "Here's where it happens best," and you gave us four examples of where it is working, school year changes where they are using the schools in the summertime; "Here's why it happens," and you talked about facilitating family holidays, which I think are very important.

You spoke a little bit on it, but I wondered what your opinion would be on the fact that, especially, education advisory committees for those special students have always recommended that there be some summer programs, of course, for those students. Many of us are now hearing that if we really want to meet the demands of the world of work and meet the needs of students who are telling us they are bored with the traditional curriculum–I am now talking about people who are finding a great deal of satisfaction from co-operative education programs–we have

heard today, and certainly in our own communities, that business and industry will work with us if we can provide credits for the practical part of the learning experience. When it comes to business and technology, we know we have a demand out there in the real world for those kinds of skills.

When I came to the committee, I was looking to meet those particular kinds of needs, meaning needs of students, as expressed by both the special education advisory committee recommendations over the years and also the demands of the technical and business teachers, as they want to create more creative ways of learning.

I think you have covered most of that, but I woondered if you knew of models within your own system that you would like to see be available to other school systems or something that this committee can recommend specifically as models that are working now in a direction we should be moving in.

The second part is a recommendation from the Catholic teachers who were here just earlier. They said, "We've got barriers now in our own regulations that don't allow us to do some of these kinds of things." I wondered if you could speak to those two issues.

Mr. Cooney: One innovative program that is in effect in, I believe it is Dufferin-Peel, at the moment sees teachers go into the Square One shopping mall and set up programs for students who I guess would otherwise be dropouts and conduct the programs, some with a co-operative education base, and teach them right in the mall for credit purposes. I think that kind of reaching out to the community is valuable, not alone to the school system but to the wider community in the region of Peel as well.

I wonder if Bob has other examples he might point to or other comments he might make on this question.

Dr. Dixon: The closest models to what we have going on here now in the United States are where they have taken the summer school and night school–let me get away from the term "night school"–where they have taken the summer school and the extended day and really integrated them to allow them to take very special courses, very special technological courses where perhaps they are cost-intensive and there are not that many students interested, but because you are going to operate it at night or in the summer, you can attract people who have kind of saved up their interest for that and go then.

At the risk of repeating myself, I want to say that our summer school and night school are really almost getting the back of the hand from many school boards. They are different staffs. They are paid differently. They are not under department heads. They are not necessarily following the same curriculum. In some school boards, you get students deliberately trotting off to take one of these courses because perhaps the demands are not as high and they can get it more quickly.

They are really not part of the system the way you and we would like to see them part of the system. I think there are a number of boards down in the United States that have truly regarded the day, the evening and the summer as one whole thing. The student, the parent, the teacher and the guidance people will set up the kid's timetable according to what he needs.

1610

We believe that you do not have to do anything radical at all, that all the machinery is there and all the structures are there. You just have to make some minor changes and make some encouraging steps so that the boards will take ownership over the existing structures and have one system.

Mrs. Cunningham: I just want to make sure we are right because we have heard that there are barriers, so perhaps we will be calling on you to be more specific when we are writing our report. You are saying that the structures there–I happen to agree with you–

Dr. Dixon: We believe the barriers are minor and could be cleared away with minor legislative changes. Mr. Cooney can probably speak more directly to that from a legal point of view.

Mr. Cooney: If I could, I think Bill 70 attempted to address an issue that was brought upon the government by the courts. To our way of thinking, it did not address the question in a satisfactory way. Our reading of the court decision was that it said that continuing education teachers should be employed on a teacher's contract. What Bill 70 does is put those teachers on a continuing education teacher's contract and creates the distinction of a continuing education instructor, as well.

We certainly would want to re-examine the way in which Bill 70 has been passed and we would want some amendments there.

Mrs. O'Neill: I also want to thank you for your brief. I found the appendix very interesting and certainly very helpful. You did quite a bit of our homework for us and went across the provinces of the country, as you have done before, and showed what is happening in each of those areas. I found that very helpful.

In this last discussion we just had, you said at one point you wanted to get away from night school and talk about extended day, even though you kept referring back to night school. I would suggest that it is likely a problem that the public boards have been dealing with for a long, long time–20 or 25 years–people wanting to opt into those and people who are teaching there who maybe would not teach day school, not being under the same department heads and all of those things.

Have you discussed this with your coterminous board? I know the programs you are talking about because I taught for that board in 1963. I know those were some of the problems we were talking about. You do live across the street, in some instances, from the coterminous boards. Have you talked about that or talked to the complementary federations?

Mr. Cooney: I am sure that discussions do take place. I know that in the area of Peel and Dufferin-Peel, indeed they do try to integrate, to complement one another with regard to summer programs and continuing education programs. I am not in a position to comment on the discussions that take place across the province.

Mrs. O'Neill: I guess what you are suggesting is that the new bills will focus some of that discussion within federations and communities.

Mr. Cooney: I certainly hope so, yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: I read your brief on Easter Monday and I had a real resurrection experience because page 21 brought back many memories to me. In addition to having worn a teaching hat, as you know, I wore a trustee hat. I actually made a very extensive presentation to Bette Stephenson on point 8.3. I really found it popped right off the page, and we do get a lot of reading.

I found it quite strange to see this reappearing. I guess I thought it was an issue that had passed. My first question to you is, are you thinking only for five-year-olds? Second, in some areas of this province this would really be a crisis situation accommodation-wise. So I would like you to say a little more about that. I know it was separate boards at the time–that is the kind of board I was chairman of at the time–that had the most concerns here. Of course, it was also very much, as I remember it, the parents and teachers of francophone students who felt very strongly about this. So could you tell us why you resurrected what I thought was a dead issue?

Mr. Cooney: Yes, indeed. We are only talking about five-year-olds. I suppose part of the credit for the appearance here of this must lie with the depth to which the belief in an all-day kindergarten program survives in the Ottawa area. Suggestions keep coming back to us from our own members that we continue to pursue this matter.

Mrs. O'Neill: So it is an eastern Ontario issue.

Mr. Cooney: Yes, it is. It certainly owes its leadership to people in eastern Ontario. They are the people who keep bringing it back to us and saying: "This worked well. We believe that it has educational value. There is research to support it. Continue to pursue it, please." That is why it is here.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay, thank you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The city of Toronto as well.

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes, I think they were our strongest supporters.

Madam Chairman: A final question from Mr. Beer.

Mr. Beer: It is intimidating to follow the opening of Mrs. O'Neill in terms of resurrection. I do not know if I can quite meet that level.

Mrs. O'Neill: It is Easter week. I had to get that in.

Mr. Beer: I also would like to thank you for the brief and, obviously, the tremendous amount of work that went into it and the information that is there.

Two things: One, I would like to respond to your comments about the funding situation, because I think it certainly has to be seen by you as undoubtedly a priority issue, if not the priority issue. It is also one where I think we certainly have a responsibility to act. My sense is that 1989 is going to be an interesting year on a number of fronts, and that is going to be one of them.

Without getting into the specifics, I think that one of the virtues of this committee's discussing that issue is, given that large parts of it are very complex and difficult–and I know any of us who go to public meetings around financing in our constituencies know that sometimes it is hard to get a lot of people out, just because they find the whole things so Byzantine. I suppose there is nothing more arcane than Ontario educational finance.

I would see one of the elements for this committee's serving a real public education–public in the broad sense–focus is perhaps making less mysterious some of these issues and giving people a better sense, because I do believe that if Ontarians have a clear picture of what the existing situation is, we can generate support for a more equitable system.

I think that is really what people are after. From our function as legislators, in looking at all the children in our schools, I think that is what we want to achieve. I just wanted to note what you had said and say that I think those issues have to be dealt with. I hope we can wrestle, if not all of them, at least many of them to the ground this year.

I would like to ask you one question, because I was struck by your comment that at your recent conference hardly anyone, if anyone, talked about the school year. As we have gone through our hearings, what has struck me is that perhaps the question has been posed in the wrong way, because the issue is not in fact so much year-round education. Rather, even when we take our own discussion here today and we talk about different things that you, as teachers or school boards, want to achieve in providing programs for students in different areas and in different ways, we are looking as much at changing school programs, changing the way we approach them, changing the way we deal with extended day or night school, changing the way we look at the summer.

If we go through that process, perhaps in a sense the end result is that we have altered, if you like, the traditional or what people sense is the traditional school year. Even that is out of whack in terms of what actually exists and what is going on out there. People sense that you come back after Labour Day and it is all over by the end of June and in the evenings and the summer nobody is doing anything.

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If you look at a lot of the issues we are trying to wrestle with now, including co-operative education and other programs, by enabling boards and the system to deal more effectively with that, if we are able to deal with those issues, in the end we are going to have a different-looking sort of school year, perhaps a different-looking day that is just going to be much more varied in the things we are able to do.

Perhaps, as a committee, what we should be looking at is whether there are barriers and impediments to you as teachers or to school boards in trying to be more flexible in responding to some of those needs. I am just wondering if you would comment on that.

Mr. Cooney: If I could respond, first of all, to your comments about the schedule ahead for educational financing, it certainly gives us some optimism to hear from the parliamentary assistant that some action is contemplated in 1989. You can rest assured that there will be a brief from OECTA on the issue of educational finance, and I trust that it will be carried around by people as religiously as the one you received today and that it will be acted upon with the same spirit.

With respect to your question about changes, the brief points out that this present school year has existed since Ryerson or perhaps before. Whether there was any educational rationale for the adoption of such a school year in those days, I doubt very much. I think, however, that this school year is very deeply imbedded in the psyche of Ontario and that we cannot look to San Diego or the United States and say what happened there can happen here.

I think that what we are looking at is major social change. If this committee can effect such a change, I think that it will be truly remarkable.

Mr. Beer: I do not know that we would necessarily see at this point that this is either necessary or even desirable, in the sense that I do not think we have all the information that we would like to have to move to those sorts of changes.

It does strike me, when we hear about the sorts of demands or requests for different kinds of programs and what people seem to be expecting from the school system, that if we are dealing with those on an individual basis–as I say, we talked with other presenters about co-op programs and the possibility that perhaps some of the working part of co-op programs in effect would take place during the summer period–just by doing those things over a period of time we will have, in effect, altered the perceived traditional school year.

What is important is to look at what it is you are trying to do, because we want to try to help the students, we want to try to have programs that are going to respond to their needs. If, as a byproduct, we have a year that looks different, if 10 years from now you are doing your background and blocking it out, that is fine. But to change it just because somebody else did it or it seems to be fashionable is of no particular point.

Mr. Cooney: I think what Dr. Dixon was keying in on earlier was that the change is likely to occur when we begin to adopt a more integrated approach to continuing education with the day school program. It is not happening at the moment, and Dr. Dixon has pointed out some ways in which it could be changed.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Could I ask the question Mr. Mahoney has decided not to ask? It is a brief one about prep time. We heard from your boards, your trustees just today something which we had

not heard before, that the introduction of prep time at the elementary panel level has in fact had the unexpected effect of disrupting the one-teacher-to-class kind of approach in the primary division.

Now there is a sort of rotation of teachers that must take place in order to accommodate the prep time approach and in fact what we thought was a late elementary panel and high school phenomenon seems to be backing down into the system. As prep time becomes more of an issue of importance to teachers, that may affect that whole notion of the one teacher at the primary level significantly. Do you have any commentary on that, because we had not heard anything about that until today?

Mr. Cooney: I became aware of a presentation that was made to you by a trustee organization that is not the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was a remarkable–

Mr. Cooney: I guess if I were to be charitable, I would regard it as Neanderthal. I would not–

Mr. Mahoney: It went on for ever.

Mr. Cooney: Yes. I would not share the recommendations or the conclusions that they drew. My experience of the appearance of preparation time in collective agreements has been that it has helped and it has enriched the education that is offered to students.

Some school boards that are unable to cover the preparation time through the provision of French as a second language, or other programs such as that, have come up with some ways of covering it through the hiring of specialist teachers who rotate through the schools in a 20-minute block of time. In my experience, it has not proved to be disruptive to the kind of bond that I think you are alluding to as being important in the elementary level between teacher and student.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I know that if I had gone without asking that Steve would have just kicked himself all weekend long–

Mr. Mahoney: How did you know I was going to ask that question?

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mahoney had actually just asked if he could ask that question, but Mr. Johnston was more forceful.

I would very much like to thank you for your very extensive brief today. Perhaps Mrs. Cunningham was a bit effusive when she said we are going to carry it with us for ever. I personally was very appreciative of it, but I do not intend to carry it around with me for ever; perhaps not even beyond today. But certainly the extensive research you have done on both briefs that you presented to us has been very much appreciated. In fact, I was thinking that maybe we could ask you for the financing reform brief. If you could give it to us early, that would save our researchers an awful lot of effort.

Mr. Mahoney: We have it in Hansard after today. That is no problem.

Madam Chairman: You are certainly to be commended for that. The other thing I would mention for committee members is that we have heard a lot about Dr. Stephenson's provincial review, which we are trying to track down. OECTA has made a very nice summary in here and I think it is going to save us a lot of effort trying to locate it. Thank you on behalf of the committee for all you have done to contribute to our committee today.

The select committee on education stands adjourned till 9:15 a.m. tomorrow morning, at which time will meet in camera in this very room.

The committee adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

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From the Kingston Area School to Employment Council:
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Dillon, Mary Gayle, Managing Director

From the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association and the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association:
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Hansard
Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Length of School Day and School Year
Education Financing



First Session, 34th Parliament
Monday, April 17, 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, April 17, 1989

The committee met at 2:11 in committee room 2.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR

EDUCATION FINANCING
(continued)

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to convene the select committee on education as we continue to look at the length and organization of the school day and the school year. Mr. Jackson left a message that the Conservative Party representatives would be late and to go ahead without them, so I think we will begin with our first presenter this afternoon, the Ontario Multicultural Association. Dr. Mock, would you come forward? Please be seated. Once you are both seated, identify yourselves for Hansard and then begin your presentation whenever you are ready. For the members' benefit, I would mention that there is not a written brief for this presentation.

ONTARIO MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

Dr. Mock: I am Dr. Karen Mock, the president of the Ontario Multicultural Association. I would like to introduce Eva Smith, who is a member of our board of directors. We were very pleased to have been invited to make a presentation to the select committee on education. As I mentioned to Ms. Manikel, the clerk of the committee, because of the particular timing and our tremendous involvement in planning our annual conference, which will take place in a couple of weeks in Ottawa, it was not possible for us to prepare an extensive written brief, which is our usual style, but we were delighted to be able to accept this opportunity to come and tell you something both about ourselves and our position on this issue of the school day.

I would like to give you just a little bit of background on us as presenters and on the organization, so that we can leave a fair amount of time for questioning and so that you will understand our context and can then question us in the area in which we have some expertise. I myself am an educational psychologist and an educational consultant in the area of multicultural, ethnic and race relations. I teach, in the psychology department at York University, courses in child development and educational psychology.

Eva was for many years a school community outreach worker for the North York Board of Education and has been involved since the early 1960s in Caribbean youth adjustment programs in North York. She lives in the city of Scarborough and is also very active in the Jamaican Canadian Association, where there is even a youth bursary that has been created in Eva's name. Now she is retired, but we are keeping her busier than ever working in the area of youth programming, parent education and also working in programs with seniors.

We are presenting on behalf of the board of directors of the Ontario Multicultural Association, also known as OMAMO because of the French component in our title. It is a volunteer nonprofit organization of individuals and groups interested and involved in promoting multiculturalism and race relations through education, broadly defined. The membership and board include people from a variety of ethnocultural and racial backgrounds working together in the interests of a better society for all Ontarians. They are drawn from all levels of the education system, including early childhood, elementary, secondary and post-secondary education. Also, many are members of agencies, organizations and/or community groups involved in multicultural and race relations education and training. I did bring some material on the organization that we can circulate or leave behind for the committee to peruse.

On the matter of the school day and the length of the school year, there are several points we would like to make. First, we hope that the committee would take into consideration the historical context and the changes in the demographics in our society that perhaps call for a change in the way the school day and the school year will be organized, such as the rural-urban shift that we have experienced.

Originally our summer holidays were so that the students could be free to work on the farms and so on. In that context, if we are going to have a school year where students are free to work in their particular communities when there is the greatest peak of work, one of the communities

we would hope would be considered is northern Ontario. It would certainly make more sense to have the long holiday at different stages, when it would be more appropriate for their families and their communities. One member of our organization mentioned the fall hunting season in the north; the present school year seems to fit more into the holiday needs of southern teachers and the southern communities.

In terms of the length of the school day itself, we would be very favourable to having heritage languages and heritage programs, not just linguistic but also cultural and historical programs, integrated into the regular school day. We point out that at times when we talk about heritage languages, some school boards do not include black history and heritage programs, for example. We feel we need more time for what used to be called extracurricular activities for youth, but now integrated within the regular program so that these are not just tag-ons and looked at and seen as much less important. The terminology now, we understand, is "co-curricular," indicating what an important part of a student's development this really is.

We would like to emphasize that before any changes are made, parents and the community be involved and consulted. In fact, that is why we were so pleased that we were consulted. Many of our parents today do not understand how our school system works and would welcome the opportunity to state what the needs are in their particular communities that could be met by modifying the school day or the school year in some way. We certainly endorse and support others who have talked about the importance of parents and community groups in any research or consultations that you will continue to do around this issue.

On the matter of the school year and holidays, we would encourage the province to consider far more flexibility in what holidays are considered legitimate for people to take time off, both students and teaching staff. Presently there are members of certain religious and cultural groups who have their holidays honoured by the school system while other staff members have to use their special days for religious festivals that meet their needs. Often the students themselves have to make up on their own work that they have missed; there is not the flexibility and the timing, or the accessibility to staff to assist them.

There is subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, resentment towards both teachers and students. In our case, we feel very concerned about the students who are getting very negative vibes from their classmates and even from teachers when they have to honour their special festivals and religious days on their own time and then make up for it. We feel flexibility is important. It should be possible for Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Greek Orthodox to have their high holidays.

Make no mistake, we know how difficult that is. With our conference that is coming up in Ottawa at the end of April, even though we have members, as I mentioned, of many different religious and ethnic and racial backgrounds on our board who decide when these dates will be and we pore over different calendars to make these decisions, I discovered from one participant who called me the other day that this was now taking place during the fast of Ramadan. This fast changes. It is two weeks earlier every year, so she said that we may not have been aware when it would be. She did not blame us for having our meeting at that time, but I immediately got on the phone and consulted with the hotel. We have organized a predawn room service for anybody observing that fast and a late supper to accommodate those needs. I was told by my membership chairperson this morning that we had a letter from a community in Ottawa that said we overlooked Ukrainian Orthodox Easter. We are doing our best to attempt to accommodate.

When this is drawn to our attention, we see if there is something that we can do to be more flexible. We would like to support the committee and the education system in figuring out strategies to meet people's needs, as opposed to being at loggerheads and making it seem as if the system is not sensitive when we know, especially in today's climate, that the education system, the ministry and the government do want to be sensitive to these kinds of issues.

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To make a fourth point, we thought that it was important to look at cross-national comparisons. This is where my involvement in the comparative and international education association, and also that of Vandra Masemann, my colleague, come into play here, because we would want the committee to look at where Canada ranks in the world in terms of its educational achievements and the length of its school day. It is one of the best for that record in terms of the length of its school day and the amount of actual formal, and even informal, schooling that takes place in our educational system. There is a shorter year in the United States, fewer school days, and a lower international overall achievement record goes with that shorter school time.

A fifth major area is the timing and the titling of the holidays. We notice that in most of the literature and most of the information that goes out, we talk about the Christmas holidays, the March break and the summer vacation. It is rather inconsistent. We have a religious festival for the title of one of the holidays, we have a month for the next major break and a season for the next one. So we could envisage talking about the winter holidays, the spring holidays, the summer holidays. The winter break, the spring break and the summer break would be a much more equitable way in our multicultural and multiracial communities to refer to holidays.

The titles, by the way, even though we are so used to them, really send a message to some of the children, because some of the children who have Christmas holidays–and I notice that some of the briefs talked about their importance for people to prepare for the Christmas feast–but there were many students in our province who have Christmas holidays and do not have to prepare for a Christmas feast.

I do not want to belabour the point, but if we called those the winter holidays we would send a very strong message. In our schools where we are working with school boards to try to multiculturalize their curriculum and help all students feel that they have a rightful place in our province, we certainly want teaching around Christmas and teaching around all of the other festivals. We are not saying that one is any more important than the other and we hope that is what this committee will consider also.

We would certainly hope to avoid confusion and that these holidays would occur at similar times for school boards. This year we had problems not only with our own conference, but in the research that we were doing in school boards. Some were off one week, some were off another week. We do not think that it is necessary for this so-called March break to be held in conjunction with Easter, unless what we are doing is proposing that all religious and ethnic and regional communities could decide, on the basis of their own community needs, what would be the best time to have their spring break. So that might be a direction that you want to go in. On the other hand, if you are looking for some standardization, we might have our spring break at more equal intervals so that we do not have long terms, and then allow for flexibility in who will take their special days at which times.

I believe those are our major points we would like to make and I invite you to ask both of us questions. Eva asked me if I would in fact make the presentation on behalf of the board as president, but we are here to be able to answer your questions vis-à-vis the school day and school year as it might pertain to our expertise in the area of multicultural, ethnic and race relations in the school system.

Madam Chairman: Eva, would you like to make any comments?

Ms. Smith: Yes. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a challenge. We cannot, I presume, do everything, but we can try. We can start somewhere. We are a people of different backgrounds and eventually, out of many, one people. We hope eventually some of these things will be applicable. We are enthusiastic about all this and we know that yes, all of us are going to be working towards the benefit of our young people.

I am one of those people who believes that these young people are going to replace us. It does not matter where they are from, whether they are white, pink, blue or yellow. They are our future. We have to see to it that we prepare them for that future, or else all of us will pay for it.

Madam Chairman: Thank you both, Karen and Eva, for your comments. I found that there was a lot of common sense in your presentation. I very much enjoyed it, particularly your comment about our Christmas break, our March break and our summer break. Until you mentioned it, I had not really thought of the inconsistency, but I think you are absolutely right.

There are several members who have indicated they would like to ask questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for your presentations. You seem to be at the cutting edge of a number of very tough political issues for which I have great empathy because they happen to be issues which are important to me and for which I find most of our society not really prepared at this stage.

It must be a little disconcerting for you, having come from North York, to now see that they are contracting out heritage languages these days, or have plans to do so. There does not seem to be any greater move towards incorporation of the heritage languages within the school day at this stage than there was a number of years ago. I regret that, because I think it is missing the point of what heritage languages can be all about.

Can I just ask you a couple of questions? I am not sure we can be as flexible as you are talking about when we think about the range of feasts and holidays that are now there within the faiths as well as among the faiths, if I can put it that way, and in terms of then being able to accommodate the time off in a way that would be anything but

just short of close to factoring anybody's attempt to put together a timetable.

I wonder if there is not some conflict between two notions that you bring forward. One is this greater flexibility and the other is the notion of secularizing, the language at any rate, what the holidays are. In this kind of society, are we maybe not wiser to move towards totally secularized holidays as our general rule and allow the religious practices to take place within those kinds of contexts, if they will, or outside them, but that the actual holidays, in terms of large breaks for schools, be secularized entirely? I wonder if I can throw that out to you.

Dr. Mock: It seems as if there is an inconsistency in saying that we need to standardize on the one hand and allow the flexibility, but I believe we could handle that, as you say, by secularizing the main breaks. It may mean cutting down on the amount of time of the larger school holidays and calling them winter, spring and summer and then increasing the number of special days that people are entitled to. That means that if there was someone who needed to have the two weeks off–let's say you decided on two weeks during the Christmas season, or the winter season I guess I should say. Pardon me. I am just–

1430

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The old December break.

Dr. Mock: Having been born and raised in the Toronto school system there is a certain amount of acculturation that goes on. Having the December break then, or the December-January, winter break, what have you, a certain period of time, and those who needed a longer period could use their special days for that; whereas if someone celebrated his New Year in September and October he could take his special days at that time. While that makes it somewhat difficult perhaps for a manager to manage when his staff will be on and off, we have that happening now. It is just that the way it happens now there are, as I said, these subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle resentments, where we have heard some of our Jewish teachers being told: "You get both holidays off; that's not fair," this kind of thing.

On the other hand, in some systems, such as hospitals and others that do go year-round and always have to have staff, while people are entitled to the so-called secular religious holidays–what I am saying is that when the banks are closed they might be closed on certain groups' religious holidays, but they are still known as civic or bank holidays. They trade. Someone says, "I'll work Christmas and New Year's for you if you'll work Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for me;" or Ramadan or whatever. This is going on in an informal way in systems that allow for that already. The school might accommodate that flexibility by having the standardized secular breaks and then increasing the number of special days, and people recognize that they are special for everyone.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Two things come out of that. One is that presently we do have the situation where it is the Christian holidays–you call them secularly ordained as well–within our society. They stay, it seems to me, given what is happening on the Lord's Prayer these days. I believe those holidays are inviolable at this point.

Dr. Mock: We will come and talk to you about that one, too.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. As an organization, it would strike me that you might be well placed to do this. Have you ever done a charting of the holidays by group in society, to look at the numbers we would be talking about; whether there is a large difference between those by certain faiths or sects within faiths? Do you know whether by granting this kind of flexibility, in fact there would still be sort of a week more for one group than another, which would cause the sort of systematized resentments you are talking about? Have you ever done that?

Dr. Mock: We ourselves as an organization have not done that kind of research, but we have access to other documents that document the kinds of holidays. We would hope that before any changes like this were made, you would commission research studies to be done, either through the Ministry of Education or through those who would want to do that kind of demographic research.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think we should probably ask them to do that right now. That would be a useful thing. We have not asked them to do anything for weeks now, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: That is because we have not sat for weeks.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is right. It would be interesting to see if anybody in the bureaucracy has that kind of information at the moment.

Ms. Smith: I think this matter would need a lot of community involvement, because there are different religions. That is something that will need some research.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It strikes me that somebody at the Ontario Institute for Studies in

Education has overlooked the possibility of a doctoral thesis here. I am shocked if it has not been done.

Dr. Mock: At the present time, I believe most of the boards have approximately five special days that anybody is entitled to. It includes things like going to a funeral and moving. There are all sorts of things you can use your special days for. Of course, as I mentioned, some people have to use them for their religious festivals.

It seems that if we reduced the number of the secular type of holidays and had those added to the list of special days, we would not end up with an imbalance, but that is just from having worked in the field for that long and seeing that right now we can accommodate it with some people using their special days and others not. This is not to say that the research study should not be done. We will put in a proposal soon.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston has quite rightly pointed out the difficulties in reorganizing the whole system to accommodate the various religious festivals, but I think that is nothing compared to the difficulty in trying to convince people that a spring break is actually going to occur in Canada in March. I think we maybe have to have it in May; that might be a little more appropriate.

Mrs. O'Neill: I just want to pick up on what Mr. Johnston is saying. I do not think there would be any disadvantage in us thinking seriously of suggesting to the committee which has been formed by the ministry that it actually do this, because we are looking at religious education in the public school system and we could certainly put this in as one of our recommendations.

Just for the record, I also find it a little confusing when you are talking about these special days, because, as I understand from listening to you, what you are suggesting is that the days within a collective agreement that are set aside for such things as compassionate leave or special leave now have been broadened by some boards to religious observances. I do not have any experience of that myself, but I think if that is going to become a collective bargaining issue, then it would no doubt stand in a different light from moving, for instance, which in my humble opinion does not have quite as high a profile or as much significance in a person's life; then again, it may have.

If I may go to my own line of questioning, I wanted to ask one other question. I guess it follows from what Mr. Johnston said. With the religious holidays, particularly of the major faiths where there would be, say–I am taking a number out of my head–10 students in the school, do you feel there would be some kind of attempt to co-ordinate the examination period, or are you suggesting that these makeup days would even go into such things as major examination times? Is there that much consultation that goes on with the community that the examination times would not infringe on major religious holidays that a number of students would be celebrating?

Dr. Mock: At present that is really variable from board to board. There are some school boards where the community is comfortable enough and knows enough about the system to approach it and let it know when its days are; or the system itself, because it is used to being in a culturally diverse neighbourhood, tunes into when these various festivals are, and then on its own does not schedule exams to conflict.

Mrs. O'Neill: Would your association be taking this as an initiative to try and raise an awareness among school boards in the province that, particularly for such things as fundamental as examinations, these dates should be taken into consideration?

Dr. Mock: Yes, we certainly attempt to raise the consciousness, but with us–and I am going to turn it over to Eva here–it is again the importance of empowering the community to understand how the system works. We cannot tend to educate all systems on who is in their local areas, but the more the parents and the community understand how the system works then they can interact with it effectively. Our strength, as well, is that we have the kind of resource people who tend to work with teachers and with school boards and with principals to try to raise their consciousness as well. It is really a two-way street: the community and the school boards working together to solve the needs of the community and to take a community-based and child-centred approach.

Mrs. O'Neill: What I would like is a little more about your concept of co-curricular. I think you mentioned black history. Are you talking about after hours, or are you talking about more fully integrating this into a curriculum?

Ms. Smith: I think the time has come when black history should be a part of the curriculum. It helps the young people, the black students, to know about themselves, and it also helps others to be aware of the history of blacks.

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Mrs. O'Neill: So this would be world history, are you suggesting, Eva?

Ms. Smith: I will give you an example. I remember one teacher said to me: "What is all this about black heritage or black history? History is history." I said to him, "I'll give you some material." I gave him some material to read on black history and I said, "When you have read those, then we'll discuss it." After he read it, he came back and I said, "Now, as a history teacher, did you know about those things?" He said no and I said, "Well, that's the reason we're talking about teaching our children black history."

That has been done through community groups teaching black children about black history. If they are not taught, then when it is said: "You black people have contributed nothing;" they cannot say: "Yes, we have contributed something."

How many people know that blood plasma was really discovered by a black doctor? That very man died because he could not get a blood transfusion. He was sick, he was taken to a hospital; because he was black, he was not admitted. By the time he was sent to another hospital, he died.

Therefore, I am saying to you folks that it is important for them to be able to know something about their background so they too can feel good about themselves. Children who have some esteem, who feel something good about themselves, will have less difficulty with because they will feel that they too can contribute something to the world in which they live. We will have less problems with these people. That is why I am asking that black history be a part of the curriculum.

Dr. Mock: If I could just add something about that point, we also find that when we look at some of the black history curriculum–and you were mentioning you mean a world view and so on–some of the traditional ways of teaching black history and black heritage focus on the American experience and the African experience but many of our kids say, and Eva and I have discussed this: "Well, wait a second. What about the Canadian black experience and the Caribbean black history?"

It is quite an eclectic history and this notion of co-curricular suggests that we also want to sensitize our teachers and our system that these aspects of curriculum are not just add-ons and are not just things to tag on at the end of the day if some of the kids have time. Many of them do not; they need to be out working jobs and so on, so we would really like to see programs like black history, black heritage, inculcated into the regular curriculum. In order to respond to the teachers' cry of, "There's no more time; we have too much to do in the day already;" if we had a more flexible kind of a school day, we could include such programs.

There are other aspects of the co-curricular activity. One of our board members is actually a police officer who is very interested in this area. He said, "We need more time to work with youth." Again, having the clubs and having the co-op study programs and having visitors come into the school, if we can integrate more of that into the school day for more of our multicultural and multiracially diverse communities, then we feel there would be more commitment to multiculturalism and multiracial education and antiracist education as part of the regular school curriculum.

Madam Chairman: A final question from Mr. Keyes.

Mr. Keyes: Not something new but rather following what Karen mentioned–I think you mentioned it, Karen–that there is a problem sometimes with the students who take the time off for holidays and then come back and feel they are behind in their work. Surely we have to retain some type of structure in the educational system. We do have X number of days of the year we decide we are going to retain for school days, whether it is 195 or 200 or whatever, but for the sake of students it is the responsibility of teachers to organize their work in such a way that a student who will be away for two or three days, as far as I am concerned, should know well enough in advance what he is expected to hand in for assignment purposes, much as students who work on a contract basis with teachers do today?

The appropriate laying out of the type of assignments and year's work by the teacher should then allow that student an opportunity of knowing that his responsibility is to produce a certain amount of work for that teacher at a certain period of time, whether he has been away or not.

We cannot get to the point of trying to recognize everything society now has thrust upon us and build it into a type of school day, school year. As we said earlier, it would be an almost impossible task, so I think we have to back up just a bit.

I fully agree that the staff should be allowed the same number of days for whatever purpose is essential, but I think you fell into a trap when you yourself, I believe, said "for religious or festive days." As soon as you have done that you have

immediately shown the bias again. Whereas you are opposed to the bias of some of the types of religious holidays on which the year is currently based, you are falling into the same trap by saying "recognize religious and festive days of other religions." You have to remember those who profess no religion, too. Therefore, you end up having a problem.

I think we have to go back and look at the whole business of saying: "We have X days in the year. There has to be good planning of the curriculum. Teachers must make the students well aware of that in advance. Time will be allowed off for the religious and festive occasions of those who have them, and the same thing for staff." Then we maintain a type of workable structure. Otherwise, it becomes very difficult. That, of course, will all be at a cost, because you do not have a very good opportunity of transferring days back and forth.

Then, again, if we try to make changes—and this committee has certainly been making recommendations for changes—we will have to keep in mind the whole purpose of the educational system, looking at one of the additional goals we added from our first report, so that we will try to remove barriers to education of young people; that also means to staff and parents. We have to develop a system that provides for tolerance, for equity.

I do not think we should kid ourselves that we are going to be able to extend the school day by too much in order to add too much more to it, but we have to try and respond more to some community needs, as both of you have said. In some communities that will mean just as much of an emphasis on yellow history as on black history or white history, and that is what we have to be aware of. We must not start fragmenting our thinking into little cubbyholes of those different types of things, because tolerance, respect, dignity, equity will cover them all, rather than trying to pigeonhole each of these areas. I welcome your comments.

Dr. Mock: I am glad you ended your comments with—

Mr. Mahoney: So are we.

Dr. Mock: You have to be quick.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Consensus is reached again.

Dr. Mock: Let me rephrase that. At the beginning of your comments I circled a word here, and it was "equity." Then you moved towards that discussion. I agree that we cannot be talking about fragmenting, compartmentalizing, retention at the expense of being divisive. At the beginning, though, when you were speaking about how we have to be careful, because if we do enough planning some students will know when they are going to be away and they will be responsible, that is when I circled the word "equity," because I thought, "Let's not kid ourselves." When we say we have a system that treats people with equity, why should it be some children's responsibility to make up for their work and plan ahead, etc., while others' events are built into the system so that they do not have that additional responsibility or onus?

Then, of course, you moved in your comments to say that if we are really going to have educational equity, then we do have to look at these issues very broadly and make sure that some children are not being treated with more advantage and others are at a disadvantage in our system. It is complicated. There is no question that it is complicated and there are no easy answers, but I think as long as we continue to consult the community and attempt to find a solution that does remove the barriers to equality, then we are really well on our way to achieving that.

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Mr. Keyes: The other one I would support you on, which I did not mention and should have, is the whole idea of secularizing the title of holidays. That, I think, is quite appropriate as we work towards a more year-round school year. We talked about breaks earlier. The breaks would come in such a way that there may be more breaks of some lesser length than we see now and some of greater length. That would help to get around that. Regarding our summer holiday of two months, I think more and more people are beginning to realize that may have to change in exchange for something else elsewhere in the year.

Dr. Mock: There is one thing I would really implore of the committee when it is making its recommendations. In this particular area, as in many others, there is always a tremendous resistance to change. This particular area of multicultural, ethnic and race relations is a very emotionally volatile area. If we talk about changing the name of the Christmas holidays that can create the most tremendous backlash, just the same as the Lord's Prayer issue does.

I would implore the committee to emphasize the importance of effective communication of such issues, laying the groundwork through good, in-service training and in-service education conducted by people who are experienced in

dealing with that kind of backlash. When we take a child-centred and community-centred approach to these issues, I believe, and I know that Eva does too, and our board believes, that people in the school system are honest people who are genuinely trying to do their best. They want a system of equality, tolerance and equity. They want children to develop the kind of positive self-esteem that will make them into good Canadians and effective, competent problem solvers.

It is when they are made to see the logical inconsistency between that goal for all Ontario children and the fact that some children are being treated in such a way as to undermine their self-confidence or undermine their access to equality, when they can be made to see that from the child's and the community's point of view we lay the groundwork for them to more easily accept these kinds of concepts.

We are not saying that some of the history and foundation on which this country has been laid should be thrown out. In fact, many people in race relations training sessions say, "If they're going to start changing the Lord's Prayer and they're going to start wanting things to be the way they are in their country or for their needs, let them go back to where they came from." We can pick up on that and say, "You mean that people should develop a positive Canadian identity when they're here."

Then we point out that initially, when people's forefathers came to this country, they did not pick up on the Canadian identity that was here with the aboriginal peoples, but rather people came here to have an environment where they could practise their freedom of religion, economic opportunity and have the kind of education for their children that they really wanted. That is really all we want.

Ms. Smith: We are all immigrants to this place, whether we came by boat, five weeks on the ocean, whether we came by the underground railroad, whether we came by wagons or whether we came by the plane last night. We are all immigrants; and out of many, one people.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Except for those who have been here 35,000 years. We have to cut it off some place.

Dr. Mock: Except for those who really were here; and of course we need a system that will accommodate all of those needs.

Ms. Smith: Yes, as I said, out of it all we are all one people.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Dr. Mock and Ms. Smith, for coming before us today. We very much appreciate the time and effort you took to do so, and I think the committee very much welcomes your viewpoint.

Our next presentation this afternoon–I am not sure whether it is actually a presentation or an interrogation, but we welcome Dr. Charles Ballinger, who is the executive director of the National Association for Year-Round Education. As members are aware, Dr. Ballinger comes from San Diego, California and is going to bring us–

Mr. Mahoney: Good weather.

Madam Chairman: I hope he brings us good weather, but in addition he is going to bring us a perspective on how year-round education is working in the United States. Welcome, Dr. Ballinger.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION

Dr. Ballinger: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I have prepared two handouts and I see those two are being distributed right now. Let me refer to those. While Miss Manikel is distributing those, let me say that I serve as executive director of the National Association for Year-Round Education, but I also serve full-time as a curriculum co-ordinator for the San Diego county public schools. So I am a public educator, as well as doing work for the association.

Madam Chairman: Dr. Ballinger, just before you go into your presentation, I have been asked by the committee to clarify whether there is any relationship between you and a Bill Ballinger. Your credibility will hinge on the answer to this.

Dr. Ballinger: Presumably, the Ballinger line all began at the same point. I do not know the member, so I cannot say whether he is or is not a close relative.

Madam Chairman: I think that establishes your credibility. That was the right answer. Thank you.

Dr. Ballinger: You should know that my family comes out of Ohio. I served for 13 years in public education in the state of Ohio before I went to California. I have been there now for several years. This is my 31st year in public education, so I am familiar with the area and it could be the Ballingers all came from the same general beginning.

I would like to refer to my statement. I am not going to read the whole thing into the record but I would like to point out a couple of paragraphs. If you go down to about the fourth paragraph, I will

read a couple of paragraphs in a row here, because I want to focus on this.

I would like to focus attention for a moment on the traditional school calendar. It is not an educational calendar. It has no instructional validity to it at all. It continues in place by the sheer force of tradition and not because of logical educational philosophy or theory.The traditional school calendar has always been an economic calendar. It served the agricultural economy of the last century and the first half of this century very well, but its reason for being is over.

Then the last paragraph of my first page: Please note with me that year-round education is a general concept which incorporates two primary elements. The school year is reorganized so that learning is more continuous and the traditional summer vacation is reduced somewhat to reduce summer learning loss. Within this general concept, there is great flexibility which allows adaptation to local needs and circumstances.

On the next page I list several of the kinds of calendars that we are aware of to this point.

I have read through the transcripts of your previous hearings and I have a feeling there are several kinds of year-round education that have been referred to on those previous days. I think it needs to be kept in mind that when one person, whether a witness here or a member of the committee, speaks about year-round education or the extended year or whatever, I have noticed sometimes they are referring to different kinds of things, although they each have their own separate idea in the context of the statement which is being made.

Finally, I would like to read into the record the last paragraph on my second page: The school's primary role is to educate children. Implementation of year-round education, including the extended school year, holds great promise for students. While discussion of lifestyles is important and is certainly a factor when changing something like a school calendar, nevertheless it is important for all of us in education to focus on the primary purpose of school.

Rather than read this whole statement, I invite your attention to a monograph which has been distributed. I helped to write it. I would like to have you respond either to this opening statement or to the monograph, or to anything that you have heard in the hearings to this point.

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I must say too that I appreciate being asked to be here. Just two weeks ago, Dr. Robert Barless and Dr. Robert White from the Niagara South Board of Education were in San Diego consulting with us about an effective school program. I happened to mention that I would be here today. We noted the irony of the group coming to San Diego and that, two weeks later, I would be coming here in return. I should also note that we really appreciated having Dr. Robert Gardner and Ann Porter at our conference in San Diego in February. We were really sorry some of the rest of you could not be there as well.

Mr. Mahoney: So were we.

Madam Chairman: I think we have reached another consensus on this committee. We are all sorry, although after hearing about the weather you had maybe we are not quite so sorry as we could have been.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a pleasure having the horse's mouth here, because we have been hearing a lot indirectly. I want to start off with the instructional benefits concept. A lot of what we have heard is that the moves towards year-long schooling actually started for other than instructional reasons, as the past system did, to meet overcrowding problems and things like that, and that there has been a rationalization for the instructional benefits since that time. One of the prime arguments is this notion of the continuous learning model or a model which limits the amount of learning lost because of the shorter breaks.

As you would have read through the transcripts, a number of people have taken on that approach by saying that the prime learning loss takes place in the first couple of weeks and then the curve is actually not that different for people who are away for five or six weeks or those who are away for 12 weeks. That is a major attack which has been thrown at us as people who are not expert in the field. I would really like to hear your response to that primary attack on one of the presumptions of the benefits of year-long schooling.

Dr. Ballinger: There are two parts to your statement, and I would like to respond to both. It is true that year-round education first began as a response to overcrowded conditions, but once we got into the concept and watched it develop, we began to realize it really is a better way to educate children. Then we began examining the concept of the traditional school calendar and realized that the traditional school calendar really has lost its reason for being. It has no instructional validity to it at all.

The second part of what you are referring to is also correct. Actually, we forget most of what we have just learned in the first 24 hours.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I found that.

Dr. Ballinger: That is the reason teachers have a period of reteaching. That is part of the natural teaching-learning process. Indeed, after two weeks you have lost a little bit more, but if those who are opponents of year-round education argue that there is quite a bit of forgetting in two-week periods, they are really arguing against the Christmas holiday, winter vacation or whatever it is. There are times when you need to take vacations, but I would submit that logically two to three months away from school, from formal instruction, involves a much greater degree of forgetting than two weeks.

In fact our teachers say, and I am sure your teachers here in this province would as well, that after the winter holiday period, the Christmas holiday period, students require maybe one or two days of reteaching refreshment and they are back on task, while students who come back in September generally require, depending on the class and the level of achievement they have obtained, perhaps five to six weeks of reteaching and rework.

So I would submit to you and to the critics of year-round education that they really need to rethink the argument against the concept, because I think that if we look at the logical nature of the way people learn, year-round education is infinitely superior to the traditional school calendar.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have a lot of semestering going on in our system at the moment and we have the bizarre situation–at least I consider it a bizarre situation–of having exams taking place in mid-January for a lot of kids, right after they have had this two-week break over the Christmas period. Not only are you taking the break but you are then examining kids at that point rather than prior to it. Some of the people who were making arguments against moving our present system for the reasons I gave wanted us to retain our present semester structure.

I wanted to ask if there had been any analysis done on the concept of reteaching, in the sense of how much time is spent through the year by pedagogy in general reteaching at different levels, and whether or not the time that was taken at the beginning of the school year in the traditional system is actually that much greater, if looked at over the year, from the pedagogy used in the other systems. We did not really get any information about that.

Dr. Ballinger: There are different kinds of calendars with different vacation periods and levels of students. If you have a gifted child at the top or a child at the bottom who is having more difficulty in the learning mode, you are going to have different periods of reteaching, and that sort of thing. So I cannot give you a blanket statement about reteaching, but let us just take an average class situation, if there is such a thing as an average class.

In the traditional calendar at the elementary level, the usual period of reteaching–retracing from the previous year–is four to six weeks, depending on the nature of the class; at five days a week that is 20 to 30 days of reteaching. In a year-round calendar, in two or three of the most usual calendars, suppose there have been maybe three or four breaks during the year and suppose you take at the maximum three days of reteaching–usually it is two days–but let us say there have been four holiday breaks and three days of reteaching, that is 12 days of reteaching contrasted with 20 to 30 days.

Once again, I would submit the year-round concept really has a great deal going for it in relationship to the traditional calendar. Am I responding to your question?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes, directly; thank you. There are some other aspects of that, but I would like to leave them, if I can, to another time.

The other question that comes up around this in the criticism is that at this point, although it has been asserted that there is great pedagogical benefit, the studies do not actually show that as dramatically as the proponents are purporting them to do. We have not had that criticism of the Oxnard statistics particularly, but the city of Los Angeles statistics, I think, were specifically focused on by a couple of groups. Could you respond to some of those things? You probably saw those things in Hansard as well.

Dr. Ballinger: Yes. Many critics say that we have not shown dramatic gains–I think you used the word "dramatic"–although most of them will concede we have shown gains. The question then becomes one of what we want after 11, 12 or 13 years of schooling. For instance, one of the critics of year-round education has pointed out that we only have a three-week gain after a full year of schooling.

My response to the critic was that if there is a three-week gain each year for 12 years, that is 36 weeks' worth, which is a full year's worth again. I will take it. While for an educational researcher three weeks' gain may not seem dramatic, nevertheless most of us work in a world of students where small gains are what we see and

small gains are what we hope for. Consequently, we teachers accept what we can where we can.

There are some studies such as the study coming out of Willow Canyon school in suburban Salt Lake City where the researchers and the principal have followed the students' scores over a long period of time, several years now of longitudinal study. At all levels–low, medium and high–students have gained. Those gains were made on the California test of basic skills, what we call CTBS.

I would think we still will need more work, more research, but I think we are on the right track. Most important is that we do not know of any school anywhere using any one of the year-round calendars where achievement scores have gone down. That says to us that we are not harming students, and the chances are very strong that they are going to be helped by the calendar.

1510

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Madam Chairman, I would like back on, if I might.

Madam Chairman: Certainly, Mr. Johnston. Just before we go to Mr. Mahoney, who has a question, I have a few myself. It is one of the advantages of being chairman; you get to use your prerogative and squeeze in there.

I have a couple of questions. One is related to child care, to day care. In Ontario, our system is set up so that we have camps and facilities available for our children during the summer break. At virtually no other time do we have those facilities available. Because we are very much a northern climate, it may in fact be difficult to set up these kinds of facilities throughout the year.

What has been the experience in California, which we realize has a vastly different climate, with the child care problem? How do parents adapt to the fact that their children may be on different holidays at different times and the fact that parents may not be there, if they are both working, to care for the children on these sporadic bases?

Dr. Ballinger: You raise a very interesting issue. Of the three most frequent questions that we hear from parents as parents consider the option of year-round education by the school system, the first is child care, which is the issue you have raised; the second is, what about the family vacation period? The third has to do with extracurricular, which I believe you call co-curricular activities. At the elementary level, that means the kinds of things children are involved in after school. At high school, that means athletics and cheerleading and all those kinds of things.

Child care specifically is an issue we must address in our communities, but year-round education did not invent the child care issue. It is an issue that is going to be with us for the next several years and all that discussion does is bring it to the fore for discussion a little bit earlier.

I am thinking right now of a cold weather state like Colorado where the school district in the Aurora area, called the Cherry Creek school district, which has several year-round schools, signed a contract with the public parks and recreation department to offer child care activities in the context of the public parks and rec department.

Parents, a single parent or both parents working, can drop the children at the close-by recreation facility. A school bus comes along at the appointed time and takes those children who are in school at that time to school. At the end of the school day, the bus brings children back to the recreation facility where parents can pick up those children and take them home. For those children who happen to be on intersession–that is what we call the vacation period in a year-round context–those children have full-day activities right there in the parks and rec facility. For parents, that means the children are always under the protection of a public agency.

I am also thinking of Oxnard, in California, where they have a different kind of arrangement. Theirs is broader in that there is an agreement between the school district, the public parks and rec department and other agencies, such as Boy Scouts, girls' clubs and so on. Parents have some choice of activities, either with the public parks and recreation department or with some of these other organizations. Between them there are a number of activities they can provide, and of course not all parents want supervised activities in all days of a vacation period.

I guess what I am suggesting is that communities considering year-round education ought to have a lot of discussion among all the child care provider agencies so that the issue is talked about and resolved, but it is certainly an issue that is a solvable issue. It is only a matter of getting together and working out the problems.

Mr. Chairman: Just one supplementary on that: In Ontario, the parent is more or less responsible for child care during the summer break. We do have subsidized spaces and that type of thing, but by and large the parent is responsible. Obviously, if parks and recreation were to take on that responsibility throughout the

year, there would be a cost incurred by the state. Do you have any statistics at all, for instance for Colorado which you mentioned, as to the additional cost to parks and recreation for carrying on these year-round programs?

Dr. Ballinger: No, I do not, so I cannot give you cost figures.

Madam Chairman: Okay; thank you.

Mr. Mahoney: Dr. Ballinger, thank you for coming. I wonder if you could take us back a few years. Whenever you try to effect change, particularly change that is seen as radical, there have to be some agents of that change forcing people to rethink things. I do not know this, but maybe you can help me: I suspect the Jarvis bills might have had something to do with people rethinking from a cost perspective. I think there were two of them that had a major impact on all the services delivered through the municipalities in California.

We do not seem to be facing that kind of pressure. In looking through your booklet, the majority of the benefits deal with relief from overcrowded facilities, additional compensation of teachers, enhancing their profession, reducing their burnout, cost savings, etc. You also state that the education of the child is obviously the primary role of the school.

For our own understanding, maybe you could tell us a little bit of what the atmosphere was like that led to that change. Was it the pressure from the Jarvis bills? Is it primarily for cost-benefit, an administrative success, that changes were made? Let me be candid. Are the improved benefits, or perceived improved benefits, in education simply a byproduct of all that; or was the driving force, the agent of change, to improve education?

Dr. Ballinger: My response is probably, all of the above; because different communities have approached this issue in different ways. It is true that the work of Howard Jarvis, what we call proposition 13, certainly had its effect; although the immediate effect, surprisingly, the first few months after proposition 13 was that there was a slowdown in the year-round movement because of that bill, but the net effect over time has been to help push the concept along.

As I responded to Mr. Johnston earlier, in the first years of year-round education the pressure did come from overcrowding or the need to save money and that sort of thing, but once we got into it we realized there were other benefits and values, what I would call educational values outside the saving of space and money. So we now count 125 to 150 schools that have a year-round schedule, not to save space and not to save money but because they believe in the educational values involved.

Teacher burnout, higher student attendance, higher teacher attendance, lower dropout rate, reduced vandalism—all those things occur, whether the school is in a multi-track for overcrowding or whether it is what we call a single-track school, just because of the better pace of education and the educational values.

I have taken the lead in helping to reorient the thinking in the movement away from the matter of saving space and saving money and towards the educational values involved. Almost always, when I am invited into a community to talk about year-round education, the extended school year or whatever, I first talk about the educational values involved, because I have found that parents will pick up on the educational values first and say, "If you can do something better for my kid, I can agree with it."

There is always some initial resistance to the change, but we have found that where communities allow the idea to percolate for a year to a year and a half, most parents will buy into the concept. I do not know whether I have responded directly.

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Mr. Mahoney: Is that what happened in your case, that it was put out for public consultation over a year or two, or was it simply something that was legislated and done and then people grew to accept it?

Dr. Ballinger: Different communities have done it in different ways. Some had to implement a multi-track for overcrowding very rapidly. Some have taken the luxury of two years of preparation. Our association recommends a year to a year and a half. We found that two years or more brings change to a halt. You can always plan and study and plan and study and nothing ever happens. On the other hand, implementing change too quickly has a reaction; so we say a year to a year and a half.

Lately, there has been some pressure from the Legislature in California to move along with the year-round concept because the Legislature is faced with a multibillion-dollar bill. They simply say they do not have the taxes to meet that bill. When I say bill, I am speaking of money. Consequently, through a bill called Assembly Bill 1650, there is tremendous pressure for schools in California to consider the year-round concept. The same thing is true in the state of Utah. It is my understanding that you will have a representative from the Utah Department of State

here on Wednesday and that he will speak to that.

In Michigan and in Ohio, we have single-track, year-round schools, not for the purpose of overcrowding or saving money but just because they believe in the values involved. I would say the provincial Legislature here should consider the educational values every bit as much as any kinds of other values that might be involved.

Mr. Mahoney: You may have been asked and I apologize if it was asked, but have you actually measured the impact on, say the dropout rate? Is that in here? I was looking for it.

Dr. Ballinger: I did not put those data in the monograph, but the four comprehensive high schools in Los Angeles that are on a year-round schedule have all reported reduced dropout rates.

We think that comes from the more frequent vacation period. It is the nature of teenagers. For example, most teenagers who have had trouble in the previous school year will return when school opens for the following year for two reasons. One is that they hope for a fresh start; but also they have to come back to see what all their friends have been doing. With the more frequent breaks that the year-round concept has, we find that teenagers want to come back to find out what their friends have been doing, so consequently the dropout rate has been reduced. We think it is the natural sort of thing that happens after a vacation period.

Mr. Mahoney: Can you quantify it? Do you know how much it has been reduced?

Dr. Ballinger: I do not have those statistics with me, but I will be glad to get those for you and the committee.

Madam Chairman: I think Mr. Johnston has some additional questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one or two. I would hate to have somebody come all the way from California and not get the full spectrum of questions.

Madam Chairman: I have four on my list, so any you do not get, I will get.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: First, there is a whole range of issues that has been raised and I want to try to move through some of them, if I could, that have not been touched on.

On the matter of students working, at the moment we have had some major concerns raised, I would have to say, by people in our communities about the level of work that is being undertaken by young people and the way it is affecting their academic performance and the dropout phenomenon, etc. Some people have alleged that the move to a year-round approach–it would probably be on a single track here by virtue of our climate and what the people would opt for, although I think some people have argued that that is not necessarily the case. In fact, in the far north where people would want some breaks from the winter and would use your country as a playground, that may not be the case in the long run.

The question has been raised whether moving to year-round schooling on the single-track basis may not hurt kids in the sense that they cannot make as much money and the break is not as long. Therefore, they are going to take more part-time work during the school year to compensate for the fact that they cannot take the whole two and a half months in the summer to make a lot of money. Recognizing that California is quite different climatically, as has been recognized already, and that there are other experiences in the United States, do you have any information on that phenomenon, which is fairly recent here?

Dr. Ballinger: We have looked at the matter of jobs for students in some detail. What we have found is that most students under 16 do not have jobs that are affected in any way by any school calendar, whether traditional or year-round. That is 80 per cent or so of our students, so that narrows it down. We are talking mostly about 16-, 17- and some 18-year-olds who are still in school, and when we look at that client group what we have found is many of those do not have jobs either during the school year or in the summer.

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But speaking of summer, what we have found is that we actually hamper the possibility of jobs by having college students and secondary students all looking for jobs at about the same time, June 15. Consequently, the question has to be asked, and the logical question is, why do we put all of our young people who are seeking jobs on the starting line at the same time, around June 15 or June 30, when they are all competing for the same, all too few, jobs?

Again, pointing to the four comprehensive high schools in Los Angeles, they have found that students who need to work or want to work actually have found it easier to get jobs on the year-round schedule than on the traditional schedule where all were competing for the jobs at the same time. Many 16-, 17-or 18-year-olds have jobs that are Saturday jobs not affected by a calendar. They are stocking shelves in a grocery or are in a fast-food operation. Most of those jobs

actually can be enhanced by a year-round schedule.

Now the issue of whether students in secondary school should be working is certainly an important educational question. I know that is going to be debated for a long time to come because there is a lot of research that says students who work too much have significantly lower achievement, but that is an issue I think is a little bit separate from what we are discussing today. If I may speak frankly, I think one of the dumbest things we do in education is to have college students and secondary students all looking for jobs at the same time. It just makes no sense economically.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: The way our economy is set up here is a little bit different too, in that you have certain types of jobs that would be available on a 12-month basis, whereas with our agriculture industry and tourist industry everything is aimed towards the summertime, so high school and university jobs are much more–even our factories changeover does not take place in the middle of winter, changeover takes place in the summer.

Dr. Ballinger: I understand that, and of course much of society is built around the school calendar as well as the seasons of the year, but we have had some experiences that I would like to share with you. One would be a rural district in the state of Idaho where they adopted a multi-track calendar. Farmers initially opposed introduction of year-round education because they said summer is a time for vacations. What they found once they got into it was they actually had a better chance for vacations with their children, because farming is big in the summer and farmers cannot take vacations during their peak season.

On the matter of resorts, we have a resort area in the Lake Tahoe area, on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe, where they have a big summer tourist season. They also have a big winter ski season. Those parents were always busy during the summer and the winter seasons, so they asked the school district to develop the longest vacation periods during spring and fall, which were kind of down periods. The question arises here in Canada as well, in Ontario. Would not the same thing be true? Would not the farmers be busiest during the summer months and least likely to take vacations with their children?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Absolutely, would be the answer in my experience. Are you going to argue the matter?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: No, I am just thinking about the jobs. I never wanted to go on vacation with my parents. I wanted them to go on vacation in the summer so I could stay at home alone.

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Dr. Ballinger: We have found that quite a bit. Parents, when they first hear about the school district wanting to introduce year-round education begin talking about these family vacations. As we have examined it, it almost has become a fantasy. You know the idea of families going with their children for three, five, six, seven weeks at a time is very rare.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Here it is followed by intervention from the children's aid society.

Mr. Mahoney: Exactly, protection of the child.

Dr. Ballinger: Most families go on vacation for about a week at a time. If there are small children involved, they do not ride in a car for very long very readily. After a week or so, the parents are glad to get back home and get the kids out in the yard or whatever it might be.

It is quite right that at the high school level, the secondary level, most students at that age really do not care that much to go with the family. Maybe if they are going to the beach or the shore or some special place, they will go for a week or so, but they do not want to be with the family much more than that. We have found that a lot of parents actually have a fantasy of what their family vacations are like, more so than the reality of it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We found that here with the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations; I do not know if you remember that presentation. Having surveyed their members and a couple of the other associations as well, they all found they wanted these six or seven weeks with their kids. I agree this is a fantasy world that most of us do not achieve.

I have one final question and then I will open it up again; that is around teacher training. Proponents say this is great for teacher upgrading. Opponents say that in fact the short breaks make it very difficult for them to take major upgrading courses which will monetarily affect their status within the system. I wonder if you could respond to that a little.

Dr. Ballinger: The summer upgrading courses for teachers again have revolved around that traditional school calendar. Our experience has been that colleges and universities in the area where year-round education has been implemented changed to meet the demand. Colleges and universities do not survive if they do not have students paying tuition. If the teachers need some

kind of course work, colleges and universities that will want to survive are going to have courses when the teachers want them.

In San Diego county, where I am from, we have five teacher preparation institutions. Consequently, the institutions fall all over themselves trying to prepare a course which will meet the needs of teachers. You know: "What do you want? Do you want a three-week program? We have it. Do you want a Friday night and all-day Saturday program? We have it." Because they are competitive, they have to have students paying tuition. Consequently, I suspect that if year-round education or the extended year were to be implemented in Ontario, the teacher preparation institutions would provide some course work that would be available.

If you will turn in the monograph to page 20: Even in a multi-track system, suppose a teacher is in a doctoral program and needs five to eight weeks during the summer for residency requirements. What principals have done is something like this: Teacher on track A goes on vacation for three weeks or a month, whatever the calendar might be; this is a 45-15 so it would be a three-week vacation. They have worked it out so the teacher jumps to track B. Now you have six weeks in a row for summer work and if necessary he can jump track as well. More likely what the teacher in track A will do is tack those three weeks onto three weeks in track B and then will trade a week or two from a teacher in track C.

Consequently, it can be worked out. You know it is mostly a matter of saying: "What is the problem area? What is the solution?" Most people come to these problem areas saying: "This is the way we've always done it. We have problems that can't be solved." I would like to suggest looking at those problem areas another way. What is the problem? What are the various solutions to meet that problem?

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I was wondering, Dr. Ballinger, about adult education or continuing education programs. In Ontario we have a very strong continuing education program which uses our schools in the summer primarily and also after hours. What is the experience with adult education in California? Was there a strong program and how has it been impacted by the fact that the schools are no longer available for those classes?

Mr. Ballinger: Let me clarify. When would the adult education or continuing education classes be held? Mostly evenings?

Madam Chairman: And in the summer.

Mr. Ballinger: Full days in the summer?

Madam Chairman: Some are full-time; some are part-time, evenings.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We also have day school as well.

Dr. Ballinger: I would not think that those classes held on evenings, weekends, that sort of thing, would be particularly affected by a change in calendar at all. Those that might be held in the summer could or could not be affected, depending on the kind of calendar we are adopting. For example, some of our single-track calendars have a five- or six-week period in the summer as a vacation period. What they have essentially done is cut the usual traditional summer vacation in half. Most adults I know probably are not going to attend classes in the daytime for much longer than five or six weeks at a time. I would suspect that the adult or continuing education classes would not be affected in a great way.

Mr. Keyes: I have not had a chance to read it yet. You may have it here or elsewhere, but could you give us a little overview of the growth or otherwise of the year-round concept across the United States? Does it relate at all to climatic conditions or otherwise? I see you have talked with Texas, and we know a great deal about California. Have you got a pretty good handle or overview on other areas?

Dr. Ballinger: Currently, we have 502 schools we know about.

Mr. Keyes: Across how many states?

Dr. Ballinger: That would be in 16 states. That is a very small percentage of schools in the United States; it would be less than one half of one per cent. But we will add another 100 schools in the school year starting in July; we think of the school year as being July through June. What I am most pleased with is that it is taking root. What we are finding is that it is not easy to overcome 150 years of tradition, but we are doing it. I would suspect that by the turn of the century we will easily have quadrupled. In fact, in a state like California I would say maybe even a majority of schools will have become year-round in one fashion or another.

There are various reasons for the growth patterns. When the idea was first introduced in the late 1960s and early 1970s, some school districts came on board because in education we have fads that sweep along. So we had a rising number. Then we had a dropoff in the late 1970s. We have had a growth since 1980 as well. I would much rather have the kind of growth we are having right now, which is quite steady where

it is taking root, because I think in the long run we will win the battle.

Once again, I must say to the committee that year-round education is the one that is being questioned, but we have to continually question that traditional calendar. The traditional calendar has no instructional validity.

As to the cold-weather states and warm-weather states, the majority of states with year-round education would be cold-weather states. In terms of numbers of schools, it is heavily warm-weather states, but when you consider that we now have quite a large number in a state like Utah, which is cold in the winter and hot in the summer, I think we are well on our way.

Mr. Keyes: When they use the year-round, how much integration have they been able to effect with colleges and universities as well? We have said before that we do not want to have students going out from high schools and colleges looking for work at the same time. On the other hand, if we are going to provide teacher training, etc., for some of them, there has to be a little room in the system to accommodate teachers in the area who really want–I must admit that is becoming less and less for various reasons, as far as the need is concerned.

Dr. Ballinger: Let me approach your question from several vantage points. Many colleges and universities have a quarter system, which is a year-round system; 45-15 is essentially a quarter system. It is not that radical a proposal. Colleges, however, have responded less to the year-round concept than public schools, because as most of you know it is far more difficult to make any change in college or university than it is in public schools. In our business of education, we say the easiest to change is the elementary level, secondary is more difficult, and colleges and universities change very slowly on anything.

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We have had some colleges and universities approach us, because they are beginning to think, as the year-round movement takes place at the public schools, that probably there will need to be some changes at colleges and universities.

As I look at the broader picture, I think one of the saddest things we have in the United States, and I would suspect here in Ontario as well, is that our beautiful college buildings, multimillions of dollars worth of buildings, are sitting largely empty during the summer months. As stewards of the public purse, I do not think we can afford that much longer, so I would hope colleges and universities would respond as well. Even for students in college, all of them trying to seek employment during the summer makes no sense; but I look at it this way: I have a tough enough job working with the public schools, I just have not taken on the colleges and universities yet.

Mr. Keyes: When you look at the elementary schools, do you also find quite a distinction between those schools that are, shall we say the K-6 schools versus those that are K-8, or the intermediate schools or junior high schools? Do you have a breakdown there? I tend to feel there may be more of them in that K-6 breakdown area.

Dr. Ballinger: You are quite right; very heavily so. Three quarters of them, anyway, are elementary schools. Again, that is because elementary teachers are more amenable to change than secondary teachers. Most elementary teachers want to do what is right for kids. If they can be shown that maybe there is a better way of educating, they will say, "Okay, we'll give it a try."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Ken wanted to hear that.

Mr. Keyes: I knew it all along. It is nice to hear it reaffirmed from someone outside the country.

Mr. Jackson: Do you not find a lot of elementary teachers are young, with families, and this gives them greater access? If I were a teacher or I were married to a teacher, I would see a tremendous amount of value in disrupting the day care relationship with my child and having greater access points for parenting. It is not underscored, but if I were a woman teacher or a male teacher who is very committed to parenting, I would see this as a tremendous opportunity. Our elementary systems are more heavily represented in this province by women than men. It is a trend that is reversing, but I do not know if that trend or that point has been raised with your experience.

Dr. Ballinger: Yes. There are several ways to approach that. You are quite right that many younger teachers do like the year-round concept because they have breaks where they can be with their children. We have had experience where some teachers are teaching in a year-round program and their children happen to live in a different neighbourhood where the children are on traditional. There are some common times they can find for vacation, but the younger teacher versus older teacher is a very interesting point.

I first began selling the concept to younger teachers saying, "You can go snow skiing in

February, something you have never been able to do; or you can take a cruise in the Caribbean in the winter, something you have never been able to do."

Mr. Jackson: You are selling this idea.

Dr. Ballinger: But I had an older teacher approach me and say, "Don't do that." She said, "I bought into the year-round concept because I am towards the end of my career and those more frequent vacation periods help me–

Mr. Keyes: Survive.

Dr. Ballinger: –survive."

Mr. Jackson: Regenerate.

Dr. Ballinger: Exactly. She was a teacher in her early 60s and expected to teach another two or three years and then she would be out. She said, and I think this is right: "I like the 45-15 concept"–or a quarter system, if you will– "because I can handle nine weeks, 10 weeks, something like that and then I have three weeks' break. That is my time for recharging my batteries." She said, "In the traditional calendar, I had my greatest difficulty in the period from the Christmas holidays to the end of June."

That is also the time when teachers are going to use the most days of illness or sick leave. What do you do when you are tired around March 20 or April 17? You say: "Well, let's see. Today's a Monday. Maybe I need another day off." Those frequent vacation periods are actually important to many teachers.

In the transcripts I did see that some teacher groups pointed out that the long summer vacation was very important to teachers to recharge batteries. We have heard that argument over 17 years. That argument is almost always used by a teacher who has never been in year-round education, has never tried the concept. Very rarely, if ever, do you hear that from a teacher who has made the switch. Once they are on the concept they say, "I now see the value."

Mr. Keyes: I will follow with one last related question. Have you done definitive studies on reduction in sick leave? Looking at some of the things presented to us by the Ontario Multicultural Association earlier, there certainly is going to be an additional charge because of the number of teachers who would leave for festive or religious purposes. Yet there might be a selling factor if it could could be shown that while they need more supply teacher days on year-round education, that is offset by less utilization of the sick time.

Dr. Ballinger: We have a couple of studies I could point to. The Oxnard school district in California operated traditional calendars and year-round calendars in the same school buildings for several years, 10 years as a matter of fact. The year-round teachers took, on average, two days less sick leave than the traditional calendar teachers. At first glance, two days may not seem like a whole lot, but if you have a system with several hundred teachers employed, with two days on the average per teacher you can see you have some substantial savings in substitute costs.

San Diego city schools also did a study, and while theirs was not as dramatic, they had a reduction of a half-day per year-round teacher over the traditional calendar; but they have several thousand teachers involved so essentially they save several thousand days of substitute costs and that can soon add up into money. With a thousand dollars here and a thousand dollars there, pretty soon you have a million dollars saved, and with a million dollars here and a million dollars there, pretty soon you have some big money to do some other things with.

There is another way to look at that, too. Let's say that some of your schools in the province are traditional calendar and some are year-round. There is a good chance for teachers to make some additional money within their own profession rather than going outside and doing something else, because if indeed there are some substitutes needed, teachers on year-round could be substitutes both in year-round and in traditional calendar schools that may be in operation and vice versa.

If the year-round school is going in months during the summer or whatever, some of the traditional calendar teachers could be available; and this could be from within the same school system, so they would be teachers who know the curriculum, know the staff, know the district policies and can very quickly come in and be substitutes. In fact, Oxnard pays teachers from within its own system a full per diem rather than substitute wages. Teachers in Los Angeles city making over $50,000 a year choose to work more days, but I would submit working within the profession is better than working outside for minimum wage or whatever it might be.

Mr. Keyes: This is a little off the year-round. Are you aware of any incentives that schools themselves, schools that have been able to reduce demands on sick time, etc., have used for additional opportunities within their own schools or for teachers to share in any of the saving?

Dr. Ballinger: I have not seen that done, because you are getting into teacher contract negotiations and things like that, and that is fairly

sensitive. The Legislature in California has encouraged districts to go multi-track year-round by offering incentive payments to do so. It is on a sliding scale from $25 basic up to $125 per pupil annually. They are doing that as a cost saving, again to save some greater costs down the line when new buildings are built.

We have not gotten very much into the financial aspects, and I would be glad to do that, because there are a lot of things to be said on that. I noticed in the transcript that there were some people who said there are cost savings and there were others who said, "No, there aren't." That depends on whether you are talking about a single-track or a multi-track calendar. The multi-track calendar saved lots of money, both in terms of operating costs and in terms of capital outlay costs because every enterprise, even public agencies, have certain fixed costs that go on day after day, whether the school is in session or not.

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By appropriating those costs over a larger pool of students, as we do in the multi-track, there are savings in operating costs. But also, by not building a building that has to be operated, there are costs there as well. So I really do say to the critics of year-round education that there can be cost savings to the public and to the taxpayer, and those need to be brought into focus as well.

I would also like to raise the issue of summer school because I notice some of those who were opposed to the year-round concept in your hearings have said, "We have summer school and that is an important ingredient." There are two things I noticed, though, in the testimony and I would like to raise these issues. The first is that some said, "You can't have year-round education in the summer because it is too warm for children really to learn." That raises the question of the value of summer school, then, because I assume students going to summer school are in buildings during the summer. What we have found is that students can learn during the summer if certain accommodations are made by teachers and principals. I would hope those accommodations could be made.

Second, I would raise another far more serious issue. That is, one of the worst things we do–again, if I can be bold, let me say one of the dumbest things we do in public education–is put students through nine to 10 months of failure and frustration, and then say to them, "Come back during summer school and we will remediate your problems." It does not work that way very much. Occasionally we are able to remediate, but most of the time not so.

I would submit that the year-round concept with frequent break periods is a much better way to remediate those problems. So I would commend the year-round concept to you members of the select committee on education for consideration. I think we do have to ask some of those other folks who testified why, on the one hand, summer school is good, and on the other hand we cannot have year-round education in the summer because it is too warm.

Mr. Keyes: Do you know offhand, from the statistics from your 502 schools, how many of them have had to add conditioning?

Dr. Ballinger: Air conditioning?

Mr. Keyes: Conditioning of any sort.

Dr. Ballinger: In the early years, back in the early 1970s when I first began talking with groups, I hesitated on the matter of air conditioning. I no longer do so. I work in an air-cooled or air-conditioned office. I suspect you folks do, as well. I would suspect most business people here in Toronto do, as well.

In fact, most of us who have some kind of desk job work in air conditioning. I no longer hesitate to say that we probably ought to be thinking about some kind of climatic conditioning of our public schools over a period of time. Obviously the cost is going to be too great to do it in the next year or two, but I would suspect, in time, that ought to be done. I would suspect that most of your new schools that are built probably are already set up with some kind of conditioning.

Mr. Keyes: With the new cold fusion experiment, if it works out, we will have no problem providing all kinds of power.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Keyes, since you uttered the words that this was your final question, I have counted four different questions, so perhaps now we can move on to Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Keyes: We have a long afternoon ahead of us yet.

Mr. Jackson: Yes, I was interested in Mr. Keyes's point. Is it not the case, first of all, that we do not put air-conditioning units in our schools? Second, it is not uncommon during a heat spell in June to close a school and send everybody home. It happened to me several times as a student, if my memory still serves me well.

Mr. Keyes has raised a good point and I think we should get some of these understandings out of the way. Third, do school boards lose grant money as a function of closing, as they do for

closing for a snow blizzard? These are just questions to ask. When I was a trustee, these were considerations. I went into the superintendent's office and said, "Why the heck didn't you close the schools?" He pulled me aside and said, "We'd lose our grant money."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am glad you have done this, Cam, because I am sure the Ministry of Education people would like to get us that information. I am sure they would.

Madam Chairman: Have any members had anecdotal experience with schools closing because of heat?

Mrs. O'Neill: Certainly the information on the grants is correct. That is why you often hear, "The schools are open, but the buses aren't running."

Mr. Jackson: That door is open, as long as one person got there.

Perhaps then I will just leave that as a question on the very fine point that Mr. Keyes raised and you caused us to dwell on even further.

I want to ask a question, if I can, with respect to program enhancement, which is an area that excites me. The debate in this province 10 years ago was on the delivery of expensive programs. That has gone by the wayside, and we are now talking about having a physical building in which to provide the program. It has shifted away from that, so we have lost that whole debate, in a sense. What excites me about a significant assault on a system, a system's changing, is that it allows you, in the process of changing so fundamentally as this concept allows us to do, to set up a whole series of new responses to problems. You have made that point.

Let me get to the program area that concerns me. We know that as a society we are not making as strong a commitment to our technical and vocationally oriented programs. They are very expensive to deliver–for example auto mechanics, with all of its computerized equipment. It is hard to develop those programs with 10-year-old technology, because there are so few kids accessing them.

We used to look at a rotation system, getting students from other schools to come and nucleate the programs. I have been trying to put in context how your system of year-round schools would help aid that process; where students, in fact, have greater mobility because they can focus more and move between schools with respect to programs.

Has there been any analysis or examination of student mobilities from neighbouring schools that are program-oriented? It strikes me that a year-round school will allow you to repeat the program more frequently; but that is a marginal increase in access, whereas we could, in fact, with more students from various schools within this board's jurisdiction, coalesce around some major technical programs and ensure the topping up of access and not have it hit and miss, not knowing a program will be fully filled. Do you understand the nature of my question?

Dr. Ballinger: Yes, I do, although I think I would really have to study the situation to respond very directly. I think the program which you have outlined would actually be enhanced in various ways by the year-round concept. If your question were, "Could students from different schools access this one special program by a change in calendar?" I think the answer would have to be yes. The school that comes most quickly to mind is a new program just opening up in the state of Minnesota, a cold-weather state, where a school is now open for 215 days of instruction. Students have voluntarily come to that program from four separate comprehensive high schools.

It is a small program because this is its first year of operation. My suspicion is, if they let that program operate over a longer period of time, more and more students will be drawn to that particular program.

In a vocational program such as you talk about, it could be a program which is very highly involved, where students are pulled out from various schools and get an intensive, almost 12-month program; or it could be one where we set it up on a quarter basis and students from secondary school A could come to the program for a quarter or so and return to the comprehensive high school, and then students from high school B or C and so on, for a quarter.

It could also be on a kind of quota basis, "We will take 10 per cent from high school A and 10 per cent from school B and others all over the city." Actually, there are various ways.

The key to year-round education is flexibility. A rigid, static program will not make it. In fact, that is what we are trying to overcome; a rigid, static system.

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Mr. Jackson: If I could just pursue that a little further, when you talk about the difficulties overcoming change for the college and university levels, our community college system was, in our original plans, a vocationally driven academic program distinct from our universities. I know you have tech universities in the United States

that serve that function very well, with shorter duration and more intense programming.

We would concur with your observation that there is this resistance to change in the post-secondary, which begs the question, where are the linkage points between secondary schools and colleges and where is there room for change? Some of us believe that with skills development and the areas of technological change, technological program delivery, that is where our best chances are.

Again, in the example I used about the auto mechanics, they have the same problem at the college level because the building stays vacant for four months of the year, and in the woodworking program, one specific example, Conestoga College, could not keep up with the demand. They were running the program starting at 7:30 in the morning and running until eight o'clock at night and burning out people and depreciating the program. When some of us who act as critics in that area suggested, "Go to a high school and develop part of the program; put it in the high school and allow that sharing," the answer was, "We couldn't dare consider that." Those are the kinds of barrier breakdowns that I am looking for, if you have any specific examples.

My first question had to do with, internally, the auto mechanics example. Now I want to ask you, in terms of those linkages with the post-secondary, has there been an acceleration of interface? Has there been some sharing of resources? Even the flipping of teachers, who can then go up–that implies hierarchy; I should not do that–they can move over to a community college setting, not as instructors but as teachers facilitating those programs. Have there been any examples of that?

Dr. Ballinger: Your idea has great merit, but I do not know of any examples yet. But then, maybe some day I will be coming back to hear how you folks in Ontario have done it, because I think the idea really has great merit; and why not?

But I think you prefaced your remarks by talking about change, the difficulty of bringing about change. You see, you have two systems now that you want to interface, each of which have has time-honoured traditions, a traditional way of doing things, and they do not give those things up lightly. So what we do in our business of education is constantly refine what we have been doing for decades, rather than branching out and trying some new things. I hope I can come back some day and see how this interface has occurred.

Mr. Jackson: That was very good.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to Mr. Johnston, I will stick in one more question. It is about the flexibility you keep talking about. I am wondering about the flexibility in scheduling. I can foresee the situation where a parent might have two children in the same school who are on different schedules, or even have one child in the elementary and another in the secondary level where the two schools have different schedules. Do you find that the schools are fairly flexible in solving these problems, so that the parents may not take five to six week holidays together but at least they can take their one week together?

Dr. Ballinger: As a matter of fact, we have faced that problem in all the years I have been working with year-round education. It is not as big a problem as most parents suspect it will be before they go into it. Since most families only take a week or so of vacation anyway, there are two or three times a year on any one of the calendars where there will be common times for older children to be on vacation with younger children and in keeping with the usual family vacation.

Plus a couple of other things: Some of our year-round schools offer independent study contracts. I am not sure whether your law allows that or not, but if a family, for whatever reason, needs to take a week away from the community in any given month, the school works with the family to give them an independent study contract. That gives flexibility.

Also, some states have enacted even greater flexibility by saying to the schools of the state that they may either count instructional days or accumulated instructional minutes. Two states quickly come to mind. Utah and California have both said schools can have a total of accumulated minutes of instruction, so instead of a basic 180, 185 or 190 days a year, they may drop back to 175 or 178 days, but lengthen the school day in such a way that the total minutes of instruction are the same as if they had made no change at all. I offer that to you because I know your committee is looking at not only the school year, but also the school day.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This has been a very interesting exchange. I have really enjoyed it a lot and your answers have been very helpful. It has been very useful that you have read the Hansards so that you can address some of these matters. Now that you have them, your insomnia problems have just finished for ever, as I was telling you beforehand.

Let me pose to you the basic question that I think a number of us are facing at the moment. None of us would argue with the notion of getting greater flexibility within the system and moving towards some other models, but if you look at ourselves, and at your system as far as that goes, at the moment from two points of view, that is the international standards we are already meeting or not meeting–recent studies are fairly heavy on the American situation in maths and sciences for 13-year-olds, and perhaps here in Ontario the Ontario French students, who were not picked up by your networks–I am pleased to say for our own sense of embarrassment, we are right down at the bottom of the levels that were achieved.

There is a question, first, of the standards our schools are meeting at the moment and whether reorganization of time, structure, is the approach we should be taking first. The other is, what is the role of the school here at the end of the century and going into the next? As some people are putting it to us, do we not have to deal with those fundamental questions, especially ones around the role of the school, before we decide what organizational structure we are going to place on it? That is how the school system has been driven in the past, by organizational structure rather than by pedagogy.

We have a presumption here of a five-and-a-half-hour instructional school day and 185 days of class, which we seem to be wedded to. Across North America there is not a huge variation from that in terms of the standard that seems to be applied. We have not really talked, as we have been provoked to do before, about looking at the custodial time that is involved with schooling and how we should be involving the community more; at those kinds of issues, at the heritage language issue that was raised today which has major impacts in terms of what curriculum we should be teaching. Are we dealing with an antiquated curriculum at the moment? Is that the problem our kids are having?

I guess the question I want to raise is, should we, as a committee, at this stage be recommending to our government that it move to year-long schooling or should we be saying, "Yes, we will allow an experiment or two with this at the moment, but you have some fundamental matters that really need to be looked at before we move on these things"?

Dr. Ballinger: Your question is very good, and I suppose it is really a basic question. May I rephrase the question in this way: Should the schools of the province first think about reorganizing the days you currently have to develop a more continuous educational model or should you be lengthening the school year so you can do more things, teach more things, and take care of some of the problem areas we just talked about?

Obviously, if we are doing at least an average job in public education, having additional days should mean more learning for students; but for the Legislature, that will mean higher costs as you extend the number of days, because you will have longer teacher contracts and all the other kinds of things that go with it.

Maybe what you would want to do is, on the one hand set up some pilot programs that would reorganize your 185 days in some way so that your costs will not necessarily go up, and then on the other have some pilot programs where the school year is extended by another 10, 15 or 20 days, whatever you choose, and see what happens in the process. What we have found so far is that simply by reorganizing the days we already have we have raised achievement scores, slightly in some cases largely in others, but nevertheless done something good.

Year-round education is not a panacea for all of education's ills, by the way, so some of the problem areas you have mentioned are going to be remediated more by good teachers, by good support from the community, by good instructional materials. Just simply changing the calendar is not going to take care of all those problems.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am glad you say that. I think some people–perhaps it is the nature of your audio-visual presentation that we saw–make it look as though year-round schooling is a panacea. That is one thing I would suggest changing a little bit. It seemed to me to be a little Pollyannaish.

Dr. Ballinger: I have been spoken to about that. In fact, a few days back I noticed in the hearing proceedings that the issue was raised. My response is that those who are opposed to year-round education can make their own videotape.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It just reminded me of some of the things we say about our party from time to time, which even make me cringe. Anyway, it is another matter.

Madam Chairman: You are not the only one.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I expect it from you, Madam Chairman, but not from a loyalist like myself.

The two matters I want to discuss coming out of this are, what is the likelihood of Ontario, because of the nature of our society and our

climate, actually moving to a multi-track approach in this? Or would we be likely to go to the single-track approach where, as you say, the monetary savings are not that enormous but the pedagogical advantage may be there? How much does climate have to do with your tracking?

Dr. Ballinger: Not very much in the beginning. I suspect that in the population base you have here right now, you have enough parents who would like a different schedule. If you had some kind of optional program, there would be people who would be ready to begin it right away, for whatever reason. Maybe you have some families who would like to go to Florida in February, if that is when a vacation period might be, or something like that.

I think your question really is asking another kind of question, which is, should we be thinking in terms of starting some schools as pilot programs, or should we go into this as a large-scale measure to begin with?

Let me urge you to think in terms of a few schools in the beginning and adding more in a changed calendar over a period of time. While I believe in the change and think the traditional calendar should have gone yesterday, I do know that change occurs slowly. If you were to try to make these changes in a large-scale way, there would be tremendous political pressure on you, as a member of this committee, or the larger body, all of you, not to have the change. But if you were to start out with a small measure, and each year add to that, the change would occur and people would buy into it more and more as they learned about the concept.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But is there a critical mass problem? In other words, is it problematic if you just have one school in a system do it? What are the basic numbers so that there is some sort of integrity within the community around this?

Dr. Ballinger: The first one who makes a change on anything takes a lot of kidding and comment that is derogatory, even abusive sometimes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have noticed that.

Dr. Ballinger: Nevertheless, if we did not have those changes made, we would never have any change of any kind. I think it is important to recognize that all around us society is changing. The school has changed the least of any community organization. Why we resist change so much is something I have talked to already today, but also I talk to it in other settings.

Something that has not been said yet, but which I think maybe I ought to say just for the record, is that many educators want to preserve the summer vacation because they consider it a fringe benefit and they do not lightly give that up. Well, that is not what the schools are primarily organized to do, to provide nice summer vacations for people. Our primary purpose is to try to do something better for students. Most of our teachers, once they learn about the concept, come around but the critical mass idea is important.

What we are finding in California right now is that it is much easier this year to sell the year-round concept than it was even five years ago. We now have parents who are pushing the educators, saying: "Why are you holding this back. Let's go, let's change."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I had a couple of other questions that you actually answered in the nature of your responses. It has been a very useful exchange for me.

Madam Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would very much like to thank you for sharing your expertise and your wisdom with us. I certainly found your statements to be very forthright and full of common sense. Among other things, you have debunked the myth of the five-week to six-week family holiday.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Except for legislatures.

Madam Chairman: We very much appreciate how helpful you have been today.

Dr. Ballinger: I invite the committee to be at our next annual conference which is going to be in San Diego the second weekend in February of 1990.

Mr. Jackson : We are all ready to sign up.

Madam Chairman: I think we have consensus on that one as well.

Just before members go, I have two announcements. Dr. Mock from the Ontario Multicultural Association left with us a letter inviting us to their conference at the end of the month, April 28 and 29. If anybody is interested in attending the conference, the clerk will have the specific details, so please avail yourself of that.

The only other announcement is that tomorrow morning, we will have Dr. Don Glines who is a consultant specializing in alternative education in Sacramento, California. I urge members to be as prompt as possible so we can have a lengthy time to talk to Dr. Glines.

The select committee on education shall stand adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning in committee room 2.

The committee adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

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Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Length of School Day and School Year

Education Financing

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First Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday, April 18, 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, April 18, 1989

The committee met at 10:12 a.m. in committee room 2.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR

EDUCATION FINANCING
(continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I think we can get started now that we have a quorum. This morning I would like to welcome to our committee Don Glines from Sacramento who is a consultant in the alternative education unit in the California Department of Education. We are very appreciative of the fact that Dr. Glines took the time and effort to be with us today and we very much look forward to hearing his presentation. As I mentioned, Dr. Glines, you are welcome to distribute your time as you would like as far as the presentation and questions are concerned.

DON GLINES

Dr. Glines: I think I am going to start out differently. I will start from the end instead of the beginning. In preparing to come back here, at the last minute I arranged to work with a group of Ontario educators out at the North York professional centre yesterday, so I brought along all these materials and books you see here. I am not going to bring them all out today, but maybe one or two of them might be appropriate, just to try to give some background.

I also started preparing notes. I ended up with about 16 pages of notes that might be appropriate for them and for you today. There were 52 items. As we ended up saying yesterday, we really need a three-day or four-day, full-time session. I explained how the three or four days might go in terms of starting from the general philosophy to ending with the nuts and bolts, the actual implementation in stages. As I will tell you later, they are planning a conference on a similar type of activity.

Because of the exciting results yesterday, this morning I got up and revised my notes again and said, "I've got to skip a lot of all that other stuff, because it would just take too long." Maybe we can kind of jump into the end instead of the beginning.

First of all, I do appreciate the invitation here. I have done quite a bit of consulting in western Canada, not so much on year-round but on things in general, and have keynoted major addresses in every major city from Winnipeg west; in Swift Current, as well as Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and so forth.

Madam Chairman: Just give us your own unbiased opinion. How many major cities are there between Winnipeg and Vancouver?

Mr. Beer: Careful; don't answer that question.

Dr. Glines: Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Banff, Vancouver, North Vancouver, Victoria–I was even in Prince Albert–Swift Current, Brandon and so forth. Back here, I have been a tourist several times. I have been in Toronto three or four times. The last visit was in 1980 for the world teachers' conference that was here. I have been to Quebec and Ottawa, and last summer I spent a week in New Brunswick. So I feel I know Canada quite well and I enjoy being here. I appreciate an opportunity to come back. I am trying to get retooled and refreshed about what is going on up here.

Mr. Mahoney: You have probably been to more parts of Canada than most of us.

Dr. Glines: What happened yesterday to make it so interesting was that I spent the day at the North York professional centre, hosted by J. S. Stephen, who is the principal at Baycrest Elementary School. He found out I was coming. He had been out to the San Diego conference also and said: "Could you come out and visit? We'll get a few people together and just talk for a while." So I said, "Great."

We were scheduled to have two sessions of about an hour and a half each: 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. and then 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., and then visit a school and see a little bit of that part of Toronto. The 9:30 group ended at 1 o'clock and we had to shove them out of the door so that we could get a quick sandwich. Then the 1:30 group stayed till 5 p.m. So we had a group of about 14 people in the morning and about 12 in the afternoon who had just kind of rearranged their schedules at the last minute to get there.

As a result of those sessions, I believe I could pretty well guarantee that there is tremendous

interest and excitement in the possibility of year-round education in Ontario. If I were here, for example, living here and working here, and you gave me the authority to do it, I am pretty convinced that we could have five to 10 schools under way by 1990. We could even have one or two at least under way by this summer; on a single track, which is a simpler kind of program. Baycrest is ready to go right now and several other jurisdictions, such as Durham and so forth, are beginning to get geared up and realize they have to do it. It would not take too much energy or effort to get the programs going in a very short period of time.

What I thought I might do is start out and revise what I intended to do. I think I will just skip around and give you first a brief review of why year-round education is growing so rapidly in California and how that might translate to Ontario, because I find your province and our state are very similar, with the growth in the big cities, the ethnic diversity, the populations that are in the rural and suburban kinds of areas. You could almost intermix Ontario and California now with very little change, so I think there is a great deal of commonality we can draw from.

I mentioned the term "year-round education." You will hear that term constantly. They are not year-round schools. In the little pamphlet Dr. Ballinger passed out to you yesterday, the editors changed it around at the last minute and put "year-round schools" on the cover, but my little book has "year-round education," and that is the way it is supposed to be. It is the National Association for Year-Round Education.

Just a quick aside on that: We debated for years whether to talk about year-round schools or year-round education and came to the conclusion that we really needed to talk about year-round education. That became our focus because year-round schools in the United States have come to mean nothing more than a mechanical calendar change. The school gets overcrowded and they say, "Oh, we can have a year-round school calendar." They house more kids and that is as far as it goes. We have had a number of districts that started the program only because they were overcrowded. They did not look at anything else. They set up a mechanical schedule and off it went. They have not done very well and they have not lasted very long in many cases.

In the programs that get involved, really understand it and know what year-round education is all about and why we are doing it, year-round education becomes a philosophy and encompasses the total perspective. It gets into the curriculum; it affects the community, parks and recreation and camping; it affects the school organization and the facilities. It just permeates everything.

When you look at year-round education, you look at it as a sort of catalyst. How can we use year-round to rethink everything we are doing in education? Could we improve the organization, the facilities, the curriculum and the way we work with the community? All those things get involved. The good school districts that have got into it have taken a very broad perspective on this, so that year-round has really become just a small part of the effort. It becomes an important part in some cases in terms of the kind of programs they establish, but the focus is on a much broader scale.

That is why I brought along for the group yesterday what I usually start out with: futurist kinds of things, like State of the World for 1989, and Incomplete Guide to the Future, and so forth. Even in Saturday's Globe and Mail there was a neat section in Focus on our whole environmental issue, Can we Save this Planet?

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Then we get into things like educating for a new millennium, learning systems for the future, tomorrow's educator, alternative day schoolperson; so that if we take a look at where we are headed in society in the 1990s and the 21st century and talk about year-round education, it is only a transition to where we are going. It is a breakdown of the conventional, standard schooling we have known all these years in the effort to begin to move away from schools and schooling towards continuous life-long learning systems, which we know are going to be no longer clichés as we move into the 21st century.

Year-round is only a transition stage in terms of a calendar, breaking the nine-month calendar from September to June to calendars that are different, that eventually will lead to a far superior program. When we talk about things like the 60-20 and the 45-15 and concept 6–varied a little bit; it would be 62-18 in Ontario because of the difference in school years–then we look at it in a much broader scale.

With that background then, why are we looking at year-round education in California and why have we moved so rapidly to implement it? What are the situations?

Demographically, in California, we are now 51 per cent minority. The state has 4.6 million students. We are adding another million students to the state in five years. By 1995, we will have over six million students. We will have just

tremendous growth. In fact, by the year 2030, California will be 38 per cent Anglo and the rest will be minority. In fact, the Hispanics will equal the Anglos in the next 20 years or so in California.

It is a tremendously changing demographic situation, and as a result the population is rapidly expanding, partly because of our climate and partly because of the economics that are there. Industry is there and jobs are there. California is still booming while other states are not doing as well, so they are attracted there.

With this situation of needing to meet the needs of one million more students in five years, that translates into a need for 800 brand-new schools in five years. That would cost the state $11 billion.

There is no way we are ever going to raise $11 billion in a five-year period. In fact, this last year we passed two state bond issues to try to fund schools. Both were for $800 million. It sounds kind of neat; close to $2 billion to fund schools. We had already approved $4 billion worth of school construction before the bond issues were even passed. We are just rapidly running out of space in many of our school situations.

In addition to that, California ranks as one of the worst states in the union in terms of need to replace schools. Fifty-five per cent of our schools have been declared inadequate, obsolete, and should be torn down, remodeled, retrofitted or something; they just should not continue the way they are.

You try to look at trying to retrofit or tear down or rebuild 55 per cent of our current schools, and we have over 7,000 schools in the state, so that means we would need to replace close to 4,000 schools; or at least remodel them, plus adding 800 new schools. This ought to all be done like right now because of what is happening in the state. You can see it is an insurmountable task.

What has happened in terms of the state-wide situation is that districts that are overcrowded are going to year-round education very rapidly in a multi-track system. I do not know how much you have read before or how much Dr. Ballinger told you yesterday about different calendars and different tracks. I will kind of skip by it now, but if you want to come back to it in questions, I will be glad to clarify any of the calendars or questions you might have.

Basically, the multi-track calendars we have add somewhere between 20 to 50 per cent more space in a given school. A quick example would be that if you go to a 60-20 calendar, which is 60 days in, 20 days out, 60-20, 60-20, so students get their 180 days but spread in three different 60-day blocks and they have three 20-day vacations; that calendar will house physically 25 per cent or mathematically 33 per cent more students. An example would be that a school built for 600 can hold 800 with no problem.

What you do is have groups A, B, C and D with 200 in each group. While group D is on vacation, A, B and C are in school. When D comes back from vacation, A goes on vacation, and when A comes back B goes on vacation. You always have 600 students in the school or you always have 200 students out of school, so you are serving 75 per cent. That way, you can continually increase the capacity of the school.

One of the calendars–it is a three-track calendar in concept 6–will house mathematically 50 per cent more students. Let's say you have a large high school of 1,600 and you suddenly have 2,400 students to house. Concept 6 will do it without any additional expense or without any additional building whatsoever, because in concept 6, you have three groups of 800 students.

While A and B are in school–800 in each group or 1,600–C is on vacation. When C comes back, A goes on vacation. They just rotate around. You always have, in that situation, 1,600 students in school all year long, and 800 students all year long are always out of school. By rotating the vacations in the cycles, we can house more students.

In our growing districts, where they are just hanging out their ears with kids, we have been forced to do that. We now have 71 districts in California that are year-round already; not all completely year-round, but at least partially year-round. We have another 20 to 25 being added in the next year or two. There are about 100 districts involved and all our major districts are involved. When I say "major," the more significant districts in terms of population are involved. We will have over 600 schools involved in the year-round system by 1990.

One major reason we have gone to year-round in California is because of the space, the crowding problem. It is an excellent way to save on construction and to save on finance. We are saving millions and billions of dollars; it has been proven over and over again. If you are a growing district, you need more buildings and more space. By going year-round, you are able to save all kinds of money.

For example, in the 60-20 where you have 25 per cent, instead of building four schools you only need to build three, so the cost of one of those four schools; the land for it, the construc-

tion, the maintenance of it over 20 or 30 years, the utilities, hiring the principal, all those kinds of things are eliminated.

In a concept 6 situation where you have three schools, you only need to build two. If you only have to build two high schools of 1,600 versus three high schools of 1,600 or 2,400, it makes a tremendous difference.

As a result of seeing these statistics and knowing that we are becoming overwhelmed with students–we are still handicapped by finances in California even though our state budget economics are pretty good; after Proposition 13 and after the Jarvis-Gann initiative which put limits on all of our spending in California and really ruined the education budgets, we just do not have the money that we can bring in to education and school construction.

As a result, we are quite limited; therefore, the Legislature passed this past year a new law that goes into effect July 1. The law says those districts wanting state construction funds–and the majority of construction funds in California now come from the state rather than local, after Proposition 13. Prior to Proposition 13, more of our money came from the local districts. Now, after Proposition 13, education is pretty well state-funded. About 70 to 75 per cent of the funds for education come from the state and the majority of–

Mr. D. S. Cooke: It is the first time it has ever made sense.

Dr. Glines: Okay. The majority of construction money comes from the state. There are some loopholes for developer fees where rich districts can still raise tax money, but by and large districts, especially the growing districts, just have to rely on state funds.

The state has passed a law that goes into effect July 1. As of that date, first priority for construction money in the state will be those districts that are year-round. They have given a gradual phase-in percentage, starting at 10 per cent and up to 30 per cent, and on up the line, in terms of applying; but very definitely, year-round districts are going to the top of the list.

As you can see, if we need 800 new schools and we are short of this money, it does not take very long to figure out that the districts that are not year-round are not going to get construction money, or at least not very much of it. That is a major impetus, as you might guess, towards districts getting on the bandwagon to go year-round.

1030

A second part of the law says that by January 1, 1990–that is next January 1–if you apply for state construction money, you must do a feasibility study to indicate whether you could save at least 20 per cent of space by going year-round without asking for state construction money. If you can, if the feasibility study shows that, then you are expected to go year-round.

If, for whatever reason, you claim that you cannot go year-round–it would cost too much or be an academic hardship or whatever–then you have to justify it and get it through the approval committee as to whether they will give you money without going year-round.

The same thing is true for portables, as of January 1. We hate portables in California because they are unhealthy and so forth. There was a major study here in Ontario, as a matter of fact, that I quote often, on the chemical soups that portable buildings create because of all the formaldehyde and so forth. Yet we have one high school in California that was built for 1,800 and now has 3,200 students. They have 82 portables on their campus. Maybe they can do their English and their math, that kind of stuff, in a portable, but it has taken up all their space, their football fields and so on. There is pressure on the library that was built for 1,800 and now has 3,200; pressure on the cafeteria, the shops and the art facilities, the more limited kinds of facilities, to try to squeeze 3,200 into space for 1,800. So they are going year-round July 1; they are mandating it.

We have a similar situation in Lodi. We have three districts next year that are mandating year-round, kindergarten through grade 12.

Finally, the breakthrough is coming at the secondary level. Prior to the last couple of years, year-round has been more an elementary effort in California, partly because it is easier to do at the elementary level and partly because the population boom or push hit at the elementary level first, obviously, and now is reaching the high school level. We now have several significant high schools on, as well as a number of junior highs, middle schools. And things are going to change; you are going to see some major growth yet in terms of year-round education in California because of the space kinds of problems.

Interestingly enough, at the same time that year-round is growing because of space problems, we have a growing number of districts adopting year-round that do not have space problems. In fact, we even had some districts adopt year-round where they have declining enrolment and have closed schools. Why in the

world would you want to adopt year-round if you do not need it for space? You do it for the right reasons.

If you go back to 1904, when the first year-round program was developed in the United States in Bluffton, Indiana, and to the 1912 programs in Newark, New Jersey, and to 1924 in Omaha, Nebraska and on down the line–I started my first year-round program in 1969 in Minnesota. Even though I am in California now in the nice weather, my year-round program was started in the snow and cold of Minnesota, so I understand the conditions back here.

I did not have a space problem. There was no reason to start it. No one knew anything about year-round. Nobody else in Minnesota was doing it. In fact, hardly anybody else in the country was doing it. There was just a group of us crazies back in 1968, 1969 and 1970, that period, who had read some stuff about year-round in 1904, 1920 and so forth and said, "That sounds like a neat idea."

The first mandated year-round calendar, for space, was done in 1928 in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. At that time, when the Depression hit the United States, there were still jobs available in the Pittsburgh area with the steel mills and so forth, but there was no money for schools. Everything else was broke. All these people were pouring in for jobs, and the schools were just overwhelmed with students. A little place called Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, which is in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, and later Ambridge, Pennsylvania, adopted a mandated four-quarter, year-round program to house 25 per cent more students.

Those types of programs made it through until about the Second World War. Even though the majority was doing it, the nine-month calendar did not become the calendar in the United States until the Second World War; and that was a factor, everybody having to do things the same way. What they found was that when they gave people vacation time from the assembly lines of aircraft plants and so forth, production levels went up.

So where do you get workers to replace those on the assembly line? Well, with everybody off to war, the only workers who were left to come in and work were the teachers, who were off in the summer. Suddenly teachers replaced Rosie the Riveter on the assembly line during the summer. As a result, then, everybody got in line; you know, "Beat the Germans and beat the Japanese," so we all went to nine-month calendars. That was how nine months became so ingrained in our country.

Mr. Jackson: I think I had a teacher who was much like Rosie the Riveter, as I recall, but with a piece of chalk.

Dr. Glines: We had about a 30-year hiatus, then. Right after the Second World War, people started talking about it again. In fact, Minneapolis in the 1950s tried hard to get it going. Their business community supported it. They just could not get it through. It was not until right around that 1969-1970 period that again, ironically, it just sort of came together, like we are in California now.

There were a couple of districts in the US like Valley View, Illinois and Saint Charles, Missouri that were beginning to grow like crazy, and suburban areas like St. Louis and Chicago. They did not have the money to build that rapidly, and even though they were building they could not keep up with the population explosion that was occurring. So they started reading and figuring out, and they read about Aliquippa, Pennsylvania and so forth, and adopted a mandated year-round calendar in those districts to house kids, for space.

At the same time, there were a few of us like myself in Hayward, California, and so forth, who had read all the good stuff about Bluffton, Indiana in 1904 and said: "Hey, that sounds neat. We ought to do that." So we started it for just the good reason I am going to tell you about now, quickly.

It was that 1969-70 period that was the launching of year-round education, so we have had year-round education now in California for 20 years. In fact, our first school just celebrated its 20th anniversary at the start of this school year. We have had a number of districts that have gone 18 years, 15 years, 14 years. In terms of whether it works, whether it costs more, whether the kids learn, and all those kinds of things, we now know the answers because we have had 20 years of evidence and research for it.

Why, then, would I want to start a program in 1969 in Minnesota when no one else wanted to or knew anything about it? Why now are some schools in 1989 in California starting year-round without space problems? The number one and most important reason is this transition to the future that I told you about a little: moving towards the concept of continuous lifelong learning that we really believe is coming in education. We will not be able to say any longer that technology is going to help us and talk about

a change of attitudes and the needs of the global society and so forth.

We began to say that learning ought to be available year-round to everybody, theoretically 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. Learning ought to be like hospitals. Health is available. Do you think of closing hospitals for three months in the summer? Are they not helping institutions? Well, are not schools helping institutions? Why in the world should we close schools for three months? We are supposed to be helping people.

We began to think about how we could do that. A quick example would be that we thought about little Billy, who gets all excited in July when he finds a bug. "Oh, bugs, bugs, I am so excited about bugs. I want to learn all about them? Where can I learn? Oh, I can run off to school. Teacher will help me." He runs off to school all excited, a teachable moment: "Teacher, teach me about bugs." He gets to the school door: closed. "You can't learn in July. Come back in September." He hangs on to his little bugs and he keeps them alive and so forth, and he comes running back in September and then he finds bugs are not in the curriculum until April.

It just does not make any sense, you see. Learning has to be accessible to kids all along. Even in overcrowded schools where Billy may not be needed because he is one more student, that does not mean he is going to come back and suddenly enrol and be there for ever. But with the good teacher, the buggy science kind of teacher in the school, or a grade 2 teacher who likes bugs and so forth, at least Billy knows he can run up to her and say, "Hey teacher, what about these bugs?" She will take five or 10 minutes or a half-hour or a day or whatever it takes, and say: "Come back tomorrow, Billy. We'll work on it." But Billy can learn about bugs.

The concept is that learning ought to be continuously available to everybody. We cannot justify closing down our schools. IBM does not close; McDonald's does not close; Sheraton hotels do not close; the army does not close, and on down the line. Why in the world should schools close? We are the only silly institution in society that thinks we need a three-month vacation, and it does not make any sense.

We are talking about better use of facilities even without being overcrowded, and more sensible kinds of education programs where learning is always available. Summer schools are not adequate. In fact, they are in the way. They are discontinuous. A little four-week session in the summer for some of the kids for three or four hours a day just does not do very much.

When you get into continuous lifelong learning, summer school in year-round programs can be called intersession. So an easy calendar to explain would be the 45-15, which here would be like the 46-14 to get your 185 days in. It is not my favourite calendar, but it is easy to explain. The students go 45 days and then they are off 15. There are four of those 15-day blocks, like fall, winter, spring and summer, on a rotating basis for the kids. So those 15 days are now summer school, but summer may come in October, January, April or whenever the vacation cycle rolls around. That three-week block is called an intersession.

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Before Proposition 13 in California, we had the most fantastic programs in the world for intersessions, because the Legislature funded the intersession summer school type of programs at 80 per cent of regular average daily attendance. We could run a full program on 80 per cent, because utilities and insurance and things like that were paid on a 12-month basis already, so we only needed 80 per cent to hire teachers and all that kind of stuff. We had kids going to school 210, 220 or 230 days a year. They might take one three-week vacation block to go somewhere with their parents or something, but during the other three-week vacation blocks they were back at school doing all kinds of neat things: oceanography things, camping out at the beach, environmental studies, drama and music down in the theatres, art, special reading programs and so forth; just fantastic.

When Proposition 13 came along, California was broke, especially in education. They wiped out all of our summer school funds, so we could not even have summer school in California, it wiped out all our intersession programs. Now we are slowly rebuilding as we are getting a bit of money from the Legislature each year to add on, to do this, to do that for programs. We are beginning to rebuild it with the lottery money we now have and our chapter 1 money and things of that nature, beginning to put it back together. But the concept of having the intersession continuous with the so-called regular session provides a school open 240 days, and it is just beautiful.

In my program in Minnesota, I was fortunate enough to have a very flexible, individualized–it was called the most experimental school in America at the time I was directing it. We had sort of a dropin/dropout program. The conventional calendars, like those Dr. Ballinger has described, the 60-20, 45-15 and concept 6, are intended for more conventional schools with a

more rigid tradition, where everybody has to be in a seat with a book at a certain time and take attendance.

But if you have a program like some of the more flexible programs, then you can have students come and go, which we did. We said: "We're open 240 days and you owe us 180. We don't care when you come; drop in, drop out, speed up, slow down. Take a vacation for one day, half a day, two days, two weeks, two months, take it in August, take it in October, take it in April, because our program is geared that way."

That will not work on a province-wide basis, because there are not enough people ready to do that kind of educational program right now, but it is a viable program for those who are ready and where there is a core, a minority ready for that program. And it works. There are all kinds of options. That is the idea of continuous learning. I am going on here a little and not getting to your questions, but I have a few more comments.

The second reason for the year-round program and what we call a single track where you are not overcrowded, have just one program going, not a multiple track, is for employment patterns. A quick example: When I was in Minnesota I got to looking at my parents and so forth and discovered that some members of our family had been married 18 years and had never had a family vacation. They might have gone to Grandma's for Christmas for a day or two in Iowa, that sort of thing, but that was it.

They were construction workers, carpenters and so forth, and they could not work when the snow was piled up like yea and it was minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit. In the summer, as soon as the ground unfroze in the spring until it froze again in the fall, they were out working 12, 14, 16 or 18 hours a day to make enough money for their family for the year, but also to get the buildings constructed. So when was the obvious time for the construction worker to take a family vacation? Obviously in January. Get the heck out of Minnesota. No one in his right mind should live in Minnesota in January.

Mr. Jackson: Unless the Vikings are in the playoffs.

Dr. Glines: Yes, right. They have an indoor stadium now, though.

What would happen then is that little second-grade Sally would go off with her parents on down to Florida in January and February and come back all excited and say: "Oh teacher, look at me. Look, I learned to swim while I was in Florida. Look at my tan. I saw the alligators. I saw the Atlantic Ocean. We went to Disney World. Dad was with me three or four weeks. I had a good time. Hey, now will you teach me to learn?"

Do you know what we found? They could learn in August. I did not believe they could learn in August, because all through my doctoral studies and so forth people kept telling me you close schools in July and August, that research shows that people cannot learn in the summer. You see how idiotic it has been all this time.

By going year-round, our construction workers can take a vacation in January, when they ought to take it, and not be hung up with all the problems of trying to pull kids out.

A couple of other quick examples: Moving van drivers cannot take summer vacations. Seventy-five per cent of the moves in California are made during the summer now. It is changing as our year-round programs develop, but prior to that–in most states it is still that way because everybody moves in the summer when school is out.

Ironically, the Toronto Blue Jays cannot take summer vacation, although they seemed to be on vacation last night. Some of them are daddies, but they cannot take summer vacation. The Toronto Maple Leafs seem to be on vacation all the time any more.

Mr. Mahoney: Year-round vacation.

Dr. Glines: Yes, year-round vacation. Farmers cannot take summer vacation. People working in summer tourist trades cannot take summer vacation.

We have a whole bunch of K-8 country schoolhouses in California. We are really an ironic state in that you read about the big high schools of 4,000 in Los Angeles, but we have more one-room schoolhouses than another other state in the union. We have a whole bunch of schools up in northern California that are K-8 that have 14, 22, 28 students. We have a high school of 61 students, grades 9 through 12, up in the boondocks. We have a real diversity.

One of our little schools has only 12 students in it right now. It is year-round, on a single-track program. They are in Yosemite National Park. The parents are all park rangers and tourist workers. They cannot take off during the summer. They have found that when they can take off is November and March, because the park is dead then. Nobody is there. They have worked out a single-track, year-round type of program that basically builds their downtime around the November-March period, and they have had some really exciting success with it.

That is the kind of employment pattern: people low on the union seniority list, the last hired. Everybody else chooses. It is also good for many of the parents who are in low-income jobs and so forth. Industries change. You know, not all industries can release their people in the summer. The downtime may be in October, April or whatever. Mom finally gets a week off. They cannot afford to go anywhere. They would like to be with the kids, but she cannot, because the kids are in school, or else they have to pull them out of school and raise all those kinds of problems. So employment patterns became a part of it.

Lifestyles: If you are affluent and want to go skiing, if you want to go to Banff or Denver or somewhere, the Rockies, in August—if you are affluent enough to go to Chile, that might be different, but in North America, you do not go skiing in August. So why not take off two, three, four, five or whatever weeks you want off, your summer vacation, in January or February for skiing?

Preferences: For example, I never take a summer vacation in California. It is the worst time in the world. Never come to California in the summer. It is too hot. It is too overcrowded. It is too expensive. You cannot get reservations. There are three-hour lines at Disneyland. But in September and October, April and May, that is almost the most precious weather in the world. The parks are empty. The beaches are empty. The motels are empty. There are discounts. No lines at Disneyland. By the way, Disneyland is open year-round now, too. Everything but the schools is open year-round. Why in the world would you want a summer vacation?

The only time you might want one is if you were going way up in the boondocks of Nepal, Alaska or somewhere, where the snow just pours in all the time except for a couple of months in the summer. You can arrange your calendar on a year-round thing to take advantage of that. Otherwise, who would want a summer vacation? Then there is the idea of transition to the future.

I have given more background than I intended, so let me skip to some recommendations for legislation to relate to all this. Then if you want to come back to some of the things about year-round, like opposition and costs and so forth, we can get into those.

What does the Legislature need to do in terms of what I observed yesterday? These are suggestions, obviously, not what you have to do. But just from what I gathered from the discussion of the 26 people who were there yesterday: first, you need, obviously, to grant permission. You have to get away from schools from September to June. You have to say that learning is continuous, it is available 240 or 250 days a year and you can have school, education, learning any time you can work it out or any time you want. If it is single-track, you can work out closing in November or April.

We have schools that close in January in California because of migrant workers, because of the fog and so forth. You can work out a calendar that fits your needs.

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Up in Muskoka they are trying to work out a different kind of calendar so that tourists have a double session up there. They are all excited about going year-round. They are ready to start tomorrow. In fact, they want to host our first year-round conference.

If you are overcrowded in places like Durham and so forth that need the space, then obviously they need to go during the summer to pick up the space. One is just permission. That relates so much to changing administrator contracts. I do not know whether you do that or whether the Ministry of Education does it or the local districts do it, but the idea that the administrator has the same contract days, basically, as a teacher just does not work because the administrator has to have a 12-month contract. I have never had anything but a 12-month contract.

Of course, if you have a year-round program, you need a 12-month contract. When is the administrator going to take a vacation? Well, having a 12-month contract he gets paid for 12 months, accordingly, and he works full-time like everybody else does, but he gets three or four weeks off. He takes that at the appropriate times throughout the year whenever he can best get away, so you will have to change the administrator contracts.

There is some discrepancy between pay scales, between night school teachers and adult school teachers and between summer school teachers and regular teachers. That was a big issue yesterday in terms of going year-round. We are all equal, we are all teaching, we are all providing programs for people. How come there is all this? There seem to be some negotiations needed in terms of what kinds of adjustments might be needed in the pay scales related to going year-round.

The second thing that I would suggest to the Legislature is to be extremely flexible. We are still talking about quality and we want kids to learn to read and learn math, so we are not talking about any watered down types of programs or the

kind of thing where you just do whatever you want. But within the parameters of making sure that kids learn to read and write and do those kinds of activities, give the districts that go year-round tremendous flexibility in terms of how they implement it.

Let it be kind of at a local level. Of course, there can be evaluation and follow-up and the Ministry of Education can check and all of those kinds of things, but trust the administrators, the superintendents and principals out there to say: "Here are the kinds of kids we have. It might be inner-city, it might be out in the boondocks, it might be suburban, but here are the kinds of kids that we have and here is the kind of calendar that I think best fits our need if we go single-track; or here is the kind of calendar that will best solve our housing problem for you, and we won't have to go out and raise taxes and try to build all kinds of new buildings and so forth."

One thing that we have done now in California to add flexibility is to allow minutes per year as well as days per year. In other words, districts have a choice of going 180 days or the minutes equivalent to 180 days, the required minimum per day for 180 days. The reason they have done that is a few of our year-round calendars will not quite fit into the 180-day pattern, especially concept 6, which is our biggest space saver. So the Legislature has allowed us to count minutes per year. What we do is extend the length of the school day. When we first did that, it was: "Oh my goodness, kids won't learn. We want kids to go to school more and it is going to hurt their performance," and all that kind of thing.

Ironically, you cannot credit year-round, but the schools that reduced the number of school days so they could go year-round and increase the number of minutes saw their test scores go up from what they were before. They are just doing real fine regarding academic achievement kinds of things.

Here is another example of flexibility–we know our gifted kids can learn algebra in six weeks; give them a book and get out of their way. Why should they sit there 36 or 40 weeks in an algebra class and be bored to death? Some of our other students who might need algebra may need 50 weeks to learn it. If you really want to learn it, that is the goal. Kids learn algebra, but they do it slower. Algebra is an obsolete course, in my opinion. We should not even teach it. If you are going to teach it, that is an example of 36 or 40 weeks. Give schools the flexibility of allowing the six weeks or the 50 weeks as long as they are providing the programs. It is like doctors diagnosing for the patient.

Third, do not restrict the calendars. There are over 20 calendars now. They are all good and they are all bad; they are all transition things. We are learning how. It is still at the propeller stage I talked a little bit yesterday about. Most schools were afraid even to get into the Wright brothers' plane version, because they knew it only flew 20 seconds and they were afraid of crashing. We had a few that tried the Wright brothers' approach and they crashed and that gave us a bad reputation.

Our better year-round programs are now at about the P-38 stage, if you remember the old fighter plane in the United States. It was supposed to be so great and save America and save the world and beat the Germans. It came out in 1943, 400 miles an hour, faster than a Spitfire and all that kind of stuff. Two years later the P-38 was on the scrap heap. We didn't even use it for training any more, because during that period of time they were developing the jets. They were finally ready for combat in 1945, so out with the P-38.

That is about where our better year-round programs are now. They are kind of at that P-38 stage. We are learning, we are getting better, but we are still in the propeller stage. We have some neat ideas of how to translate that in the next few years into the jet stage; and of course it would be an early jet and on down, but we have some real things.

In terms of cost, in terms of the Legislature, I will guarantee you it does not cost more for year-round education. All the reports you might read: it costs more, it does not cost more, it saves money and so forth; in terms of saving building costs it saves money.

Once you finally have all your buildings or whatever you are going to do, there is the budget for the year. A quick example: In California, if I were a superintendent now and I was on a nine-month calendar; say I had all my money, the budget is established–I got the money from the state and the federal government so forth and here it is, chunk. Now all of a sudden I get a wild idea I want to go year-round and I convince the community to do it. I can do the year-round on the same budget, nobody is giving me extra money. If I go year-round, I have to do it on the same budget as I had for a nine-month calendar.

We get no additional money from the state for going year-round. There is one exception right now, which I will explain in a second, but basically it has been over 20 years that we have

gone year-round with that money. So when I start talking to you about the next couple of things, do not think I am talking about pouring millions of dollars into year-round and all kinds of extra budget expenses and so forth, because in the long run you will not need it.

I am going to suggest a little money be put into year-round education as a starting point, because rather than reinvent the wheel and have to start where we started 20 years ago and struggle with it for hours and hours and learn and make mistakes, we have enough expertise now in Colorado and Utah and California and so forth to short-circuit a lot of the implementation.

What I would recommend the Legislature do is come up with a pilot, experimental, whatever you want to call it, year-round package for the province. It might be something like this: You would say that six elementary schools will be given some special funds. As examples of how it could be written, "We will fund two single-track elementary schools"–like the Baycrest school that wants to do it–"to look at educational reasons." I think they have a 40 per cent black population there and low-income students. How might year-round affect a school like that on a single-track? With changing the calendar and changing the curriculum and doing those things I talked about before, you will have some impact. Kind of experiment a little bit with a couple of single-track programs and maybe give them $5,000 or $10,000 for startup costs.

What are the startup costs for? They could do it without any money. When I started my school, I did not have any money to do it, but we are talking about encouraging and supporting it now for the long run. The money would be used to bring consultants back from California or Utah; to send them out to visit for a day or two, so they would not have to learn from scratch; to have a conference or a sort of retreat, to release teachers to rethink the curriculum and do some curriculum kinds of changes.

We are not talking about huge sums of money here, but you take a look at what might be needed, and that could be worked out with some formula in terms of the cost to schools here, but it would be a small amount for the single-track program to bring in a few consultants and to go visiting a little bit.

The same thing is true for the multi-track. You might find four multi-track schools. Baycrest wants to go into single-track; Durham needs to go multi-track because of overcrowding. That would be an example of funding a four-track program. You might give them $10,000 or $15,000 or $5,000. Again, they are not huge amounts in the budgets, but multi-track is a little harder to do because of the rotation of people and so forth; so a little bit more money for the multi-track.

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In addition, it pays off for the province more because it does save money in terms of building and construction by going year-round. Therefore, you want to encourage multi-track more than single-track as far as easing space and financial problems in the province goes.

For you to do the same–maybe you have two or three junior highs, middle schools, one on a single-track and one or two on a multi-track to get it started at that level; and then two or three at the secondary level. If you can find one, sort of a regular high school to start, a public high school. North York had several representatives there yesterday; and they have kind of vocational, adult education, night school, alternative kinds of programs. They are ready to go right now. They will start tomorrow if you will let them. Maybe give some seed money for at least one of those types of programs to see how that might work out.

I would recommend a pilot study. I can give you a quick example from California. Even after we were in it for 20 years and had all kinds of programs and knew all about it and so forth, the Legislature decided there was another calendar that sounded kind of appealing that might meet a couple of the objections they had heard from their constituents, like teachers changing rooms and no common vacation and things like that.

Utah, as you will hear from Larry tomorrow, had developed what they call the Orchard Plan or the 60-15 plan, a little different version of year-round. The California Legislature said, "We would like to look at that too." As a result, they said: "We will fund four schools in the state in four different districts for a five-year project. We will give those schools $180,000." They were generous. We did not need that much but we took it.

The irony is the recommendation for the amount of money came from the Legislature. It did not come from somebody like myself testifying. But $60,000 was for the first three years. The first year was for a planning and implementation study–consultants and that sort of thing. The second year was for the first implementation and the third year of $60,000 was for evaluation and dissemination of materials, to become kind of a dissemination centre for the state. In the last two years, no

money, and they had to run on their regular budget to show that you could run the program and it would not cost any more money and that the reason for the initial money was just startup costs to get it going.

I could have done it without any extra money if I really wanted to as a principal. But no one was taking it up in the state and so by the offer of this we have the four schools now that said, "We will volunteer." And so we have the project starting July 1 in these four schools. Last year was their first year: the planning year. Now the program actually goes July 1.

One thing the Legislature has done in California: It is really supportive of the year-round concept. It is amazing. Talk about all the issues and the battles you have, the conservatives, the Republicans, the Democrats, the liberals and those kinds of things: it has been amazing to watch the Legislature when it comes to year-round. There are no squabbles, no debates; every issue that comes up is almost passed unanimously.

When we started the program, year-round was against the law in California too. You could not do it. The first districts to start it had to get special legislation. We had two separate bills passed that allowed two different districts to try it year-round, like a pilot project kind of thing.

Since then, they have changed every single law that was in the way of year-round. "Does that interfere with year-round? Are you having problems with it? Okay, fine, we will change it." I am not being flippant. It is almost that quick. We have about 10 really friendly year-round legislators now who are willing to carry almost any bill because they believe in it. They have become sold. They speak at our year-round conferences and things and they see the benefits of it. They will carry the bills.

In addition to that, they recently passed the law I told you about: the July 1 priority for year-round when they endorsed this little Orchard Plan kind of project, just recently. Now we have identified about 16 or 17 changes, after 20 years, that we think would benefit our year-round laws and so forth. We are in the process now of getting those done. We just introduced a new bill this last month to accommodate more flexibility than we have even now. When it goes to the Legislature–the interesting thing about the last two bills on year-round is that one was sponsored by one of the most conservative Republican legislators we have from Orange county. The other bill was sponsored by the one of the most liberal Democrats we have from the Sacramento area. Both bills flew through the Legislature without any basic opposition.

We have a Democratic Legislature now in California, both the Assembly and the Senate, and we have a Republican governor. It passed the Legislature, it was approved by the Republican governor and became practice. It is just an amazing coalition because people are beginning to realize–

Mr. Mahoney: That takes all the fun out of it.

Dr. Glines: Yes, it does. So one possibility would be a pilot project kind of thing where you fund so many schools and so forth. The other possibility–either/or, and/or, which we did in California for a while–for startup costs. There is another way of going at it: in addition to your four, five or six pilot project schools that become dissemination centres, you might give some startup cost money for the next two or three years–not make them for ever, but for 1990, 1992 or whatever.

If districts or schools volunteer to go, you give them X amount, kind of on a flat scale based on size or something. So a small elementary school might get a couple of thousand dollars for consultants and that sort of thing, on up to a major high school like the one with 2,400 students. It is going to have to revamp the whole curriculum and really get heavily involved. You might give them $10,000 or something of that nature to help them get the program overhauled.

Why are there startup costs if it really does not cost more money? Starting from scratch years ago, many of us had to really burn the midnight oil and make lots of mistakes and all kinds of things. Startup support will short-circuit problems in getting it started and mean doing it better than if you start it from scratch.

The other thing is, if you are really interested in seeing it occur in Ontario, you have to show support: "We want it, we believe in it and we are willing to try it. We are putting our money where our mouth is. Here's some seed money to get some programs started and the first schools to volunteer are going to get some seed money." After 1992 or whatever the cutoff date is, there is no more seed money unless you later change your mind and want to do it again, but for a different project. It is this initial start. So I would recommend some pilot projects for dissemination schools and some startup costs–either/or at least.

On air conditioning, in California now the Legislature, again being very supportive, has given money for air conditioning for year-round programs. It is based on a priority in terms of

temperature. The hottest places in the state that want to go year-round have first claim on the air conditioning money, and on down to the least need.

You can apply for air conditioning money two years ahead. You put your air conditioning in before you start, if you want to, and then if you do not go year-round after two years and the state has given you the money, then you have to pay it back. Then you have to stay on it at least five years. If you do not stay on it for five years after you get the air conditioning money, you pay it back also. In the meantime, the schools are air conditioned and otherwise. Hopefully, they will stay on. So they have been very supportive in terms of air conditioning money.

In the meantime, how do you start in hot areas without air conditioning? I was telling the group yesterday that I was director of the American school in Haiti. There it was in the 80s all year long. It was so hot that all we had were bars on the windows; we did not have glass. We ran the school all year long from 7 a.m. to 12:30. The kids learned; they went to college and got married and all the things they are supposed to do. It was K-to-12 school.

By the way, I had to do that same thing in Minnesota because my school was not year-round when I started. It was not air conditioned and it was hot and humid in Minnesota in the summer, too. We ran our program in Minnesota from 7 a.m. to 12:30 in the summer. I carried that through to California in the central valley where you have a lot of hot farm areas. We found that the building does not get too hot early in the morning. It does not get too hot except on a few exceptional days later into the afternoon. The parents do not mind the kids getting on the bus or walking to school at seven in the morning in the summer because the sun is up at 5. The roosters are up and everything. They do not have to stand in the cold or the dark waiting for the school bus. We cut out the lunch period and gave them a snack break to shorten it down to get the number of required minutes in. We do things, like some of our physical education activities, earlier in the morning instead of waiting till noon if they have to be outside.

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Then the kids still have the whole afternoon free. They can go take a nap if they are young kids. They can stay inside and be cool. They can go out and play little league baseball. They can go swimming. They have the rest of the whole day to do it, do their homework or whatever needs to be done.

It has worked beautifully. In the winter, we may run school from nine to three or eight to two or whatever the hours might be. In the summer, we just switch it to seven to 12 or 12:30 in those areas until we get the building air-conditioned.

As I point out to the people in California when they fuss about air-conditioning, we need air-conditioning in most of the state year-round. You may have read that two weeks ago throughout the state basically it was 90 degrees to 106 degrees for two weeks. Those kids were going to school in Los Angeles in non-air-conditioned schools at 106 degrees for two weeks in a row.

September is the hottest month of the year in most places in California, yet school starts in September. Even when I was a kid going to school there, in the first three or four weeks we just melted. If air-conditioning is needed in terms of learning, it is needed in some areas at least year-round anyway, and so schools should be air-conditioned.

I have a couple of further comments here. I mentioned the conference. Another support you could give to the educators in the province is to help cosponsor, maybe even provide a little bit of seed money for some consultants from the United States. Muskoka has already volunteered to sponsor the first year-round conference for the province.

We had in mind yesterday, and we could expand it, that already the group of 26 I met with are going to form a cadre group and meet again in May. They have already been gathering a lot of material from the conferences they have been to and so forth. They are getting geared up. "We want to do it." They would like to come out and testify to you: "Believe us. We want to do it. Why won't you let us? Let's go. We're ready." They are getting geared up to get ready to go and hoping the Legislature will give permission to do it.

As a follow-up to that, they were thinking about having an invitational conference of maybe 100 up at Muskoka, and the 10 or 12 districts that seem to be most primed to start would send up a team. We talked about having a board member, a superintendent, a principal, a teacher, a clerical person, a student and a parent, a team of six or seven from these 10 or 12 districts come and spend four days or so, because it does take that long.

You need a day or two, like I said, to philosophize about all this stuff, what it is all about and pros and cons, and then a day or so to talk about the generalities, like what is a 60-20. Then you need a day or two of nuts and bolts, like

how do you schedule advanced chemistry in a four-track system when you do not have enough chem students?

It takes about six months to start up a year-round program. For veterans like myself, if I am in the right school with the parents ready to go and so forth, then I can do it almost in a day; but realistically within a month or two, because we know how to do it, especially a simple calendar like the 45-15 at the elementary level. You really can start it in a month or two and it just takes a little time to switch and notify everybody and here we go. But six months is more normal for that kind of situation for people who are just getting under way. Notifying people by December or January that we are going to start in July is appropriate.

The harder nuts to crack are the big high schools. They are going to have to do a lot more to revise curriculum and sell the teachers, because the teachers are the biggest opposition, and go through that kind of hurdle. They need about 18 months; they average about 12 months. If we started right now in April, if you really wanted to go that fast, the Baycrest school would be ready to start this July with a small single-track, year-round program. Maybe Durham might even be able to get geared up for one multi-track program.

Looking down the road a little further there are five or 10 we could definitely start, I am convinced, by July 1990. The sequence would be some meetings of this cadre group here in May and June, the Legislature taking some action at wherever you meet at the appropriate time and having a conference in the fall in Muskoka or wherever for the people most interested.

That would give everybody the information they needed and they would be talking to the communities in the meantime about: "Hey, we're going year-round for this reason or that reason; or we need to. What do you think about it?" That would give them, after the conference, December on up through next July to implement it. I am convinced we could have some neat, successful programs going in that time.

In terms of opposition to going year-round, what we found when we first proposed it was about a 30-40-30 split; 30 per cent think it is great.

If I moved to Toronto and had kids: "Why don't you have year-round? I don't want three months off in the summer." I can give you my speech about that. "How come you force me into a September to June calendar? You're really undemocratic."

I told the group yesterday there is nothing more undemocratic in America than the schools, except for the Marines and the prisons, and if you behave yourself you do not have to go to prison and if you are smart you do not join the Marines.

Next to that, what is the most undemocratic institution in our society today? It is the public school. "You will go in September. You will stay until June. You cannot learn in August. If you live on the east side of the street, you go to the east school. If you live on the west side of the street, you go to the west school. You will read at 9 o'clock. You will take math at 10 o'clock. You will, you will, you will." If you really analyse it, it is just really an undemocratic institution.

That does not mean we give up all controls, let kids do whatever they want and all those kinds of things; but again, the flexibility I was talking about to deviate from some of these patterns and begin to move in different directions makes lots of sense.

The 30 per cent are really ready to go. Like I told the group yesterday, I would guarantee them I would work for them free for a year if in a period of time of eight or 12 weeks or so forth I could not come back here and work in a given school or a given district and recruit 30 per cent.

Given the 20 years we have had year-round now I know I am safe on this, because California is very similar and we have never had less, never, in any district or school that we have proposed going year-round, we have never had less than 30 per cent volunteer.

At the same time, when you initially propose it, you can anticipate about 30 per cent are going to tar and feather me. "You silly Legislature, you spent $400 for Glines's airfare to come to Toronto, that stupid, idiotic redhead from California, that wild radical? It's dumb. Stay out there. Why do you waste your money? No wonder the Legislature is always wasting our money and raising our taxes. You pay $400 for some silly thing like that."

They get really emotional. I have answered letters written to the governor, "Governor, you've got to stop this communistic plot to take over the school system." "Governor, if God wanted year-round schools, he would have created them." Really, they get that emotional, and they are just not going to change. You can pat them on the back. They will march 700 on the school board; they will write letters to the editor; your mail will be full of opposition.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: We will have six months in California and six months in Ontario.

Dr. Glines: "You dummy, if you vote for that year-round program, I am not going to vote for you." You will just get loaded with it, because that 30 per cent–and it is not really 30 per cent; it is about 15 per cent–are really emotional and angry. It is like taking God and church and everything else away from them, it is such a major calamity for them.

Mr. Jackson: We have already done that. It is not going to be as tough as you think. We took it out of our schools, so it will be a lot easier now.

Dr. Glines: They really get emotional. What you do is just tell them, "Sorry, we need to start;" and answer their questions, give them information and on you go, because they are a minority, you have to remember, in spite of how loud they are.

The 40 per cent in the middle is the key to getting the thing off the ground in a district. You do not have to worry about the 30 per cent in favour. You do not have to spend any time with them; they are for it already. So you spend your hours with the 40 per cent in the middle who think: "Maybe yes, maybe no. I don't know. Let me think about it a little bit. Let me study it." Give them lots of information, in large groups, small groups, media, coffee klatches, one-to-one kinds of sessions and so forth. Talk to them in the grocery store and things.

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What the state average has been in California when we do it without any pressure–no one has to do it and so forth–is 52 per cent will choose year-round the first go-around. That is a state average. We have had some schools that have gotten up to 70 or 75 per cent volunteering for year-round the first year. We have had some at only 35 or 40 per cent, but no matter what the percentage is, we start. That is one of the key things. The best way to start is to start small and on a voluntary basis, and to start before a crisis erupts, like in the space kind of situation.

When you start on a voluntary basis, there is no difficulty at all getting it under way. The parents volunteer, the teachers volunteer, the kids volunteer: "We want to do it. Let's go." Syd Stephen out of Baycrest, the principal there, has written a note yesterday to hire me to superintend it. "I want to be the first year-round principal in Ontario." He is really committed to it. He means it. There is that kind of group. You start with those people and you have very successful, fine programs.

Where you run into the opposition is when you begin to mandate the program. People will accept mandating if you tease them along enough ahead of the crisis. For example, we have three districts now that are completely mandated in California, but they did not wait until suddenly, "Tomorrow we have got to start." Then we know there would be an uprising.

What we got them to do was to start two, three, four, five years ago, seeing it coming down the road. They started small and gave people choices then, so those who still wanted a nine-month calendar could have it; those who wanted a year-round calendar could have it. Then, as the growth pattern began to increase, they slowly moved from one school to two schools to three schools to four and on up the line.

For example, the Oxnard district recently mandated it. It was interesting to see the headlines in the paper: "Mandated Year-round Comes to Oxnard Without a Whimper." With all the fussing that has gone on about year-round and so forth, they mandated all 16 schools in that district into year-round and they had not one single objection by anybody. The superintendent is still the same superintendent. He did not get fired, the board did not get recalled and so forth.

But they did it, you see, by anticipating and starting the program with a couple of small private programs, letting it build–keep talking to people about the growth pattern, the need. Then, you see, you get people talking about year-round. It is no longer something new or strange or whatever. It is implemented. They can see it. It is no longer something to be feared. Then you gradually get more of the people to accept it and go with it and it will start. You try not to wait. The ideal way is to start with choices, a sort of win-win philosophy.

Right now, you have a win-lose philosophy in Ontario. Suppose we had a decision that we were going to go year-round and 51 per cent voted to keep nine months and 49 per cent go to year-round: "Ha ha, we beat them, that terrible old dumb calendar, those old liberals, we beat those guys. We are a conservative district and we are not going to have it. We beat them 70 to 30. We really beat them." So it is a win-lose: "No, we are not going to have year-round. Nobody can have it." It is like Ontario now.

The win-win philosophy says: "Isn't it beautiful? We can help 49 per cent of our people right now by offering year-round. We can help 51 per cent of our people by going nine months." So you start the program with both year-round and nine months.

There are several ways to start it. You could take one school in the district and it becomes kind of like a magnet, a volunteer kind of school. You

can take a cluster of schools, like out of every two or three schools there is one of them year-round. It is kind of an open enrolment to come there; otherwise they go to their neighbourhood school. You compare schools, like school A and school B, that are near each other: one is year-round and one is nine months.

You can even have a school within a school. We have one district in California that has, for 14 years now–they are beginning to grow now, but they got into it before the growth pattern, just because they liked year-round for the reasons I described earlier–for 14 years they have had both year-round and nine months in the same building in each of their eight elementary schools. They do not even call it year-round any more; they call it the single-vacation plan and the four-vacation plan not to raise any ruckus.

It is still a neighbourhood school, so if you moved out there from Toronto and enrolled the kids in the school, you would go to your neighbourhood school and the principal would say: "Okay, which calendar do you want? Do you want the four-vacation plan or the single-vacation plan?" You would kind of look at him and say, "What are you talking about?"

If you have had June, July and August off in the past, three months in the summer, and you want to continue that pattern, then you probably want to sign up for the single-vacation plan. That is basically it; school starts in September and goes to June.

If you would like four shorter vacations, like a fall, winter, spring and summer, if that would fit into your family's lifestyle, then sign up for the four-vacation plan. It does not make any difference what you sign up for; we are going to offer both. It does not cost any more money. It does not break any state laws. Take your choice.

They have been running 70 per cent, on a district average, choosing year-round in each of their schools. In some of their schools now they are up to 90 per cent or 95 per cent choosing year-round. What they have decided to do, starting in July, is put three schools completely on year-round, and the way it looks now maybe a fourth or fifth in the next year or two, because on a voluntary basis people are no longer choosing the nine-month calendar. That is what we are finding as we get into programs.

When La Mesa, Spring Valley started 18 years ago–they are still on it there–they did it initially for space. When space was no longer an issue the board was going to take them off year-round. We had a reverse kind of condition there. Over 700 parents marched on the school board and demanded to retain the year-round program, so they still have it.

We have students in California who have never gone to a nine-month school, and they are in high school. They come to school in kindergarten: "What is school? What is the calendar?" They start in July and they just go, and that is school. They have three or four short vacations, they grow up that way. We have a lot of parents who maybe went to a nine-month school, but all their kids, since they have been parents, have always gone to a year-round school.

Let me close with some questions to get discussion going here. There have been some mistakes along the way. One of the things the Legislature did that we feel is a mistake, although we are just slowly telling it–I told you it did not cost any more money but Los Angeles was looking for a way to get more money because of its size; that city is so influential in our state it is like a separate state.

Teresa Hughes from Los Angeles happens to be chair of the assembly education committee. They cooked up a bill which called for incentive money for year-round. They got it passed. The Legislature said, "Yes, we'll help year-round programs. We'll go along with it." Teresa was very influential in the assembly and Los Angeles is politically–you know, "I've got to do things." So they passed it and this is the third year we have had it. It is really more of a reimbursement thing; it is not an incentive.

What they did was say, "If you won't apply for state construction money, we'll give you an amount of money for going year-round." They have given up to $150 per student, not for single-track year-round but for multi-track year-round programs that were saving the state building costs and so forth.

The concept may be nice and we appreciate the support, but it is now costing the state $37 million a year because we have so many year-round programs going. What it amounted to was that Los Angeles got $12 million out of the coffers because it is so big and has so many year-round programs and is so overcrowded.

It looks skewed because then people say, "Look, year-round does cost more because you are putting all this incentive money into it." What we are suggesting to the Legislature is that it rethink its reimbursement and/or incentive thing and that incentives ought to be real incentives, like money for startup costs, money for air-conditioning, things that might be helpful.

If in some fashion they want to reward schools or continue to support them for staying year-

round and not asking for construction money, there ought to be a different formula or a different way of doing it than our current incentive money, because we really do not need it. It is nice to have–do not misunderstand me–but in terms of looking at budgets and where to put our money, up until three years ago we did not have that money and we had over 40 or 50 districts on year-round operating successfully. This money has become a bonus and they are using it for things, for textbooks and for school buses. It is like the lottery money, it is nice to have.

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In rethinking support, those things have to be thought through carefully. We are making some changes in our legislation. One of the bills we have requires that if you are going to go single-track, you can start any time you want. If you are going to go multi-track, you have to notify the parents by November. That was put in a few years ago when the opposition was trying to stop it. We said: "Okay, we'll take care of this. We'll put in that you have to notify the parents by November 1, and if 25 per cent sign a petition by December 10 you have to go to a vote before you can do it."

Fortunately, we have never had to use it. No one has ever had to go to a vote because of having had a petition signed against the program, but that is kind of in the way because it is the only education program in the state that is subject to a vote of the parents. All the rest of them the board just decides, and if you want to recall the board you can, over any issue, even year-round. If the board votes year-round and you do not like it, you can recall the board.

They have singled out this, so we want to get rid of it for that reason. It is sort of regressive to year-round, and also that November 1 deadline becomes a bugaboo, because the way we are growing districts are kind of asking, "Should we or shouldn't we?" this kind of thing, and they may not make the decision until December or January to mandate it.

We are rethinking some of our laws even after 20 years, but the interesting thing is that most of the basic laws that were passed 15 or 20 years ago are still there and are still valid. We have one that requires that all the students in a family be on the same track if you go to a multi-track school.

That has been really helpful, because one of the oppositions came along: "I have three kids in my family. I don't want one on A track, one on B track and one on C track. When can we take a family vacation?" So we take care of that. We put in a loophole. If the parents do not request to be on the same track or do not care, then the school can assign them; otherwise, just to fill up tracks schools would have gone ahead and just assigned all kids to any old track they could get them into and caused trouble.

For things like that, you look at legislation. If you try to pass some legislation for year-round, then taking a look at some of the California legislation would be helpful, because there is some stuff in there we could point out to you that is good and worth passing and there is some stuff in there that is not so good: either do not do it or do it a different way. Again, we have 20 years of legislative experience now with year-round. You do not have to start from scratch if you use states like Colorado and Utah and California that have done quite a bit of it already.

In closing, I just say: "Start now before the crisis. Start small, but start. Encourage and support the program." You might think of it in terms of, "We need a NASA in education," as I have been trying to convince people. We have to have some experiments and new efforts and trials.

A quick example would be that IBM, Xerox, the Pentagon, all those big groups, spend 10 per cent of their budgets on research and development. That is how we get new products and new ideas and progress. Middle-sized companies spend five to 10 per cent; smaller companies spend one to five per cent.

Education spends at most one fourth of one per cent of its budget on research and development. It is no wonder we do not know anything. It is no wonder we do not improve or do not do things right. It is no wonder we do not have any new ideas floating on what to do about the dropout problem or whatever it might be.

What we are suggesting is that, just as we have NASA flying to the moon now, we cannot all go to NASA and fly to the moon yet–some of us are still flying 767s and so forth–but there needs to be an effort in education. It can be a small effort, just as NASA is. NASA is expensive; education would not be as expensive.

But if the concept is there, the concept of taking one or more programs in school districts, or setting up the program we have proposed for Minnesota in the Minnesota experimental city to say: "Okay, we're going to do our R and D. We're going to take some volunteer parents and kids and teachers in a district and we're going to set up some things. We're going to experiment. We're going to try, knowing the Challenger exploded and the Discovery made it afterwards."

We know there are some givens that might cause problems, but we have got to find some different and better ways for the kids. We have got to get rid of schooling. For example, one of the reasons I left Minnesota and went to California is we had designed the Minnesota experimental city. I do not know if you heard about it or not. It is on hold right now. The Legislature got scared at the last minute and did not give us the land and the final go-ahead. We had proposed it and the plans were all drawn for it.

In fact, in Forum: New Visions for the Future in Education there is a little article about it that I wrote, "Imagineering: New Age Education: How the System Might Work." There was a full plan for the Minnesota experimental city. The justice system, the health system, the transportation system and the education system were all on blueprint. As near as you can get to doing it without doing it, we were ready to go. They are still trying to reactivate the thing now.

Briefly, we designed a city of 250,000 people in northern Minnesota on virgin land, only 10,000 acres of which would be cemented. There would be waterless toilets, a Buckminster Fuller geodesic dome over part of the city for year-round climate control, no automobiles in the city, all the latest electronics equipment that we have now for technology and for related education. We designed that city of 250,000 people with no schools, no superintendents to fire, no teachers to hire and negotiate with, no principals to get mad at. A city of 250,000 people that was a living-learning system, continuous lifelong learning.

We had the system set up and we were convinced that already, let alone in the 21st century, we could bring more learning to more people better, faster and more efficiently, more humanely, better in every way, without schools. I think the young whippersnappers in our society today are going to see the end of schools and schooling. I am not trying to sound radical. I just really strongly believe that as we look in the direction of the future, whether it is 2010, 2000 or 2040, but down the road, we cannot continue our current schools.

What we were going to do in the Minnesota experimental city was experiment with strictly volunteer people, volunteer everybody and say, "Can you develop a learning system that would function better than we have now with no schools?" It was going to be the NASA of education.

That is the kind of thinking or concept to bring to looking at it. We do not use the one fourth of one per cent we do on research. For example, we have known for years that grade 1, grade 2, grade 3 is the most obnoxious way ever to educate kids. It does not make any sense. It has nothing to do with child growth and development, curriculum theory or anything else. The Prussians developed the concept in 1530. It was brought to the United States in 1847 as a temporary stopgap to house kids.

Even the inventors, the people who brought it over, thought it would not last more than 20 years. It was a way to move from the one-room country schoolhouses as the US was growing to a series of country schoolhouses, "Stick the boxes together and separate the older kids and the younger kids until we figure out a better system." Now, 140 years later it is worse than trying to take God away from them. Try to destroy the first grade in most communities in the United States. Yet the research is there. That is an area we have researched. The research is there: grades 1, 2, 3 do not makes any sense.

I keep talking, but I will quit. I appreciate your listening and your interest because we feel so strongly about these things.

That is why I am saying year-round encompasses more than just looking at the calendar; we have to look at more than we started out with. The seventh-grade students are a good example. There are all kinds of studies on them. Academically, the seventh-graders in the United States in a typical school district range from grade 3 to grade 13. Some have fallen behind along the way, are third-, fourth- or fifth-grade readers and are behind on academic test scorers and so forth. Some kids are 10th-, 11th- or 12th-grade kinds of kids. They are actually ready for college, almost, as far as their academic skills are concerned. They are really up there.

So how in the world do you have a seventh-grade math class and seventh-grade English and seventh-grade so forth when the kids are spread that distance? Physiologically, we have all kinds of irrefutable medical evidence now that the kids are spread over a minimum of six years. Some kids are ninth-graders; they are men; they are ready for the Argonauts. Some kids are only fifth-graders; they have not even heard about puberty; they are still playing with dolls.

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We have a physical education program that runs them out there. Everybody is going to bang heads and play soccer. In the United States, we put them in flag football in seventh grade. That is

our great wonderful curriculum nationwide. "Everybody play flag football." In the fall in the seventh grade you have to be men, heroes, and learn strength and sportsmanship and all that kind of stuff.

The future Argonaut lines up against the pansy, knocks him on his tail-end. He gets physically hurt and he learns to hate PE. He goes in the locker room and gets laughed at because he has not gone through puberty. We call that good education. We are doing it over and over again. At most, only 15 per cent of the kids belong in the seventh-grade curriculum you have for them now. It is one of the things that came out yesterday in the group too.

The Ministry of Education is far too inflexible. I am not trying to criticize them. I have not met them; I do not know them. But as the conversation came from the people who were there, they were not being critically critical. Do not misunderstand me. They appreciate the support they are getting, but they do not feel they have the flexibility, the support for new ideas such as "I want to get rid of first grade," "I want to go year-round," and so forth. It is almost too much to try to do. They do not do it because it is almost too much to try to get through the Ministry of Education.

Breaking down the seventh grade, as an example, we have to get away from this idea that we have a seventh-grade English curriculum and a seventh-grade math curriculum and so forth and move more to individualization and to a continuum of learning, so that, first of all, by doing it differently in the primary grades, we will not get kids three, four, five years behind.

For those kids who are there now, work with them differently to bring them along and let the faster kids take off and go. It is not smart kids and dummy kids and tracks, like the smart track, middle track and dummy track, but it is a more individualized program where kids can flow. The seventh grade is an example of where we cannot continue the same kind of curriculum that we have now and defend it, because it is only appropriate for 15 per cent of the kids.

Madam Chairman: I found your presentation fascinating, but I have a growing list of questioners. We know you have commitments this afternoon to go to Baycrest and then to fly off into nirvana, but maybe we should go into the question phase.

Just before we do that, I would like to make one comment on behalf of all the parents in this province. The only part of your presentation that disturbed me was this concept of going to school in the summer between seven o'clock and 12:30. I figure if the child has to be up at 5:30 or six o'clock to go, that logically means the parents do as well. Right now, just getting my son to school at nine o'clock, I have to get a crane to get him out of bed. I am not sure that part would get a lot of favour with parents, but otherwise I did find your presentation very helpful.

Mr. Miclash: I found your presentation very interesting but when you mention groups that want to tar and feather politicians, I automatically thought of teachers at that point. I am just wondering: How have you sold the concept to the teachers? We have had a number of presentations where teachers are telling us: "Leave it as it is and leave well enough alone. We do not want any part of this year-round concept." I was almost thrown out of the staffroom when I mentioned it two weeks ago. I am just wondering how you are selling it.

Dr. Glines: Again, it is a 30-40-30 split in the community that affects teachers. What we do is start with the 30 per cent teachers. If you look around in a school here and school there and this week here and this week there, you will find them. We had no difficulty in California over the 20 years finding teachers on a voluntary basis when we started small, in one or two schools or three schools. Take the whole city of Toronto, for example. If we started one school, I can guarantee you there are enough teachers in the whole city of Toronto to staff one elementary school. You would have to start that small.

What you do is find those volunteers, those goers and let them go and support them. In that middle group I talked about, it becomes more flexible and they begin to see it is not so bad and a few of them begin to come over. You will have a group of teachers who will not ever want to do it. Even in the districts where we have mandated it now, we have some teachers who still do not want to do it but had to. First of all, we tried to keep it at nine months of their choice, so as long as a nine-month school was there, just transfer to a nine-month school; a year-round teacher stays here.

But if you are really a good teacher and you belong in education and so forth, then another district will hire you when we have to mandate the space. So either you accept it and understand that we have to do this and we want to do it, or else you need to find another job and we will give you a good recommendation, but we are going year-round.

The teachers, in general, have been split. We have had tremendous support. We have teachers

who just can hardly wait to do it and we have teachers who say, "No way am I going to do it." Again, the way we found to get it started was to go with the volunteers and let them go, and then get that middle group slowly into it. The last group we put into it are the resisters.

Mr. Miclash: How have your universities adjusted to the programs where the teacher wants to upgrade?

Dr. Glines: Where there is enough year-round demand, the universities have done more evening classes, more Saturday classes and more three-week and four-week kinds of classes. They have come into districts where there is a lot of year-round going on. Enough teachers sign up for it and they have short courses.

The other way we have handled it is that as long as there are still nine-month schools around in the district, as in Toronto, then a teacher, on a given year, who just had to go back to finish a master's degree or whatever, could teach in a nine-month school at that time and then transfer over. But in districts now that we have mandated –Lodi is one of them, but there also happens to be a college in there. The college is adjusting all its education offerings and courses at the graduate level because there will not be any teachers available in the summer, except for the 25 per cent who are off.

They will have some summer programs for people who come in from surrounding areas, but it will be a smaller program. They are putting part of their resources into meeting the needs of the Lodi teachers because there are so many of them. Again, it is that gradual change. If you have a dean of education like myself, you really go out of your way to provide for it. If you have a more traditional, inflexible dean who does not believe in year-round, he will say: "Tough luck. You have to be here or else." So it is part of that change period coming along.

Again, I go back to the illustration in California. For 20 years we have had it and no one has been denied the opportunity of getting advanced credits for pay scale or getting a master's or doctor's degree because there have been ways we have worked it out to the individual teacher.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: My colleague Mr. Cooke here was suggesting that he really did not want to offend the teachers again until we knew when the Liberals were having their next convention. These things are so well co-ordinated that that would affect some timing in terms of when we would bring in this kind of thing.

I enjoyed your presentation a great deal. In fact, I found that most of the questions that I might have asked you have already been dealt with in terms of the way you framed what you are putting forth. I would be interested to know if we can determine what percentage of our educational budget actually goes into research of education. I think that would be an interesting thing to know.

We have an Ontario Institute for Studies in Education here where a proportion of what it does goes into research and a proportion into straight education and upgrading of teachers. Other than that, it would be interesting to know if the Ministry of Colleges and Universities or the Ministry of Education could actually pull out some figure for us about the percentage of research and development that is actually being done. Your point made in that area is very good.

Madam Chairman: We will have Ann take down that question and pass it on to Ken Towsley.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other thing I would say is that a major difference between your jurisdiction and ours in terms of legislation is that we would have to be far less specific in our legislation in terms of enabling experimentation. For instance, under the Education Act, a great deal of the specificity of what you have been talking about is things that could easily be done under regulations here and need not be done through a change in the law, if we are presuming, as you are saying, that we have maintained our 185-day period and had to do a mild variation on what is being done in at least one of the approaches in California.

That could be done quite simply with a small amendment. The moneys and things that could be made available would not have to be authorized by legislation, but by government decision. The regulations around things like trying to ensure that families did not get split up and that sort of thing would all be done through regulation. It is a much easier process than getting it through the House because, as Mr. Cooke says, it would be such a shame if we could not have fights about this. If we just had to come up with a consensus, it would really take the reason out of being in politics altogether.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: That is why this committee is boring. We agree on too many things.

Dr. Glines: The reason the Legislature got involved in California was partly because, in the way some of the laws were written, they were in the way of year-round and they had to change the laws.

The other part was that the state Department of Education and the state board of education would not take any leadership. They were not supporting year-round. The Legislature decided it wanted to support it, so it passed the laws to get it off the ground.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: In this case, where we have a highly decentralized system in terms of the boards of education, I think it would be far easier for us to develop the possibility of experiments.

The other thing I might differ with you on would be the whole notion of incentive money. I have a feeling that at this stage, for the growing boards where it might be used for reasons of overcrowding, we would need to put in some kind of larger incentive amount based on some sort of percentage of what would be saved through capital. That would be a means of encouraging them to move to it, whereas in some other areas, as you are suggesting, it might just be for the experimental process and the interest of people involved and could be done with smaller amounts.

I found it very useful hearing you. I would be interested in tomorrow's meeting too, but following yesterday's presentation of the overview of what has happened, getting down now to many of the specifics has been very useful indeed. Thank you.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you very much, Dr. Glines. Thank you for making the last two hours our teachable moment.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Our attention span is about 10 seconds.

Mr. Jackson: Yes. It was an outstanding presentation and you covered a tremendous amount of ground. Your teaching style and demonstrative nature are very helpful to our absorbing it.

I have been asking a series of questions about this, but I have some very minor ones I would like to get out of the way very quickly. One is the compression of students where there is a rotation. There are certain things that are surrendered, such as their student lockers. It is such a small point that no one has ever raised it, but I would be anxious to know what happens in terms of surrendering your locker. A student looks territorially upon his locker, but it strikes me that with the flexibility, he has to surrender that.

Dr. Glines: In the locker case, most of the schools maintain a locker for each student, and when they go on vacation it just sits there idle until he comes back. They have put in additional lockers, although it is not essential. With some schools that are short of money or short of space, when the student goes on vacation, two share a locker. His locker now is used by another student during that period of time. When the other student comes back, he is assigned a new locker.

I guess a better illustration I could give you is when teachers do that. In a four-track system, four teachers have to share three rooms. When we initially started doing this, there were all kinds of problems with the "enemy" teachers who did not want to do it: "My room, my kids, my books, my materials, my everything; no way are you going to get my room." Initially, we had to get portable storage cabinets, put wheels on them, wheel them in, pack the teacher all up, wheel them out and then go build some warehouses to put the storage stuff in, and then bring it back. We really fought battles in the early years of year-round.

Now we are doing two things and teachers are finally accepting it when they volunteer. We say: "These are our kids. They are our rooms. They are our bulletin boards. They are our textbooks. They are our everything." The four teachers sort of work as a team and share the three rooms. The textbooks stay there. The bulletin boards stay up because they are all working on oceanography and so forth.

The only thing that might be taken out by the teacher is if there is something–she has been to Africa and she brought in an ivory elephant that she uses in part of her social studies class or something and she is afraid somebody might steal it or break it. She might take that home. Again, they left her at least one locker that she can put on wheels and lock up, although more and more teachers in that kind of situation are saying: "I trust the other teachers. I know you do not want it broken."

Mr. Jackson: Okay, I get a better sense of that.

The next area of questioning has to do with special education. We have major legislation that occurred in 1980. It was predominantly implemented in 1985 in this province. We took many of our children out of institutions that were year-round and put them into the nine-month program. By definition, those children were cheated out of three months of activation. It had labour implications and we fought that battle. However, many of us are coming to the conclusion that we really did not do that right and that the children got cheated, but the system saved some money.

With your understanding of that basic overview, what is the short history of what has been happening? How have you developed that and what has your system done with respect to reacting to handicapped children?

Dr. Glines: We have mainstreamed as many special education students as we can, while still providing support services for them. But the one thing year-round has really helped to overcome is this three-month lack that you have. The special-ed people are not all, but mostly, supportive of year-round, because what we have said is that if students need special help for nine months, they need special help for three months. It is not right just to dump them out and not give them that.

In a year-round program, the students on the 45-15, for example, are in for nine weeks getting help and take a short vacation for three weeks. It is like Christmas or something, being gone a short time because the kids get kind of restless and need a little break anyway. Then they come back for nine weeks, then three, then nine and then three. We find it has been a real benefit for our special education programs because the students are getting help over the 12 months.

Mr. Jackson: I have looked at reports where there is a dropoff and there is actually a reversal. Then when they come back in September, they are wasting the first two months getting them back up to the level at which they exited in June. Are you looking at analyses that would indicate continuous progress? I am sure you are aware that we are talking about the same types of children with lots of activation and very incremental changes.

Dr. Glines: These are on this list of research studies and evaluations that have been done of year-round. There has been quite a bit done.

One thing we found was that where year-round particularly helps is in the lower quartile of students. For whatever reason they are in that category, such as poverty, they have not done well in school in terms of the traditional school program. What we find is that the gifted and/or more affluent students come in September and they grow to June; they have made growth and the test scores are higher. The students having problems in school do the same thing; they go at a slower pace but they are still growing from September to June.

What happens is that the students who are doing well in school and have affluent or at least moderate homes continue to grow in the summer. They go to the zoo, read books, go to summer school; they do those kinds of things. They come back in September and their test scores are higher than they were when they left in June.

The lower 25 per cent, when they go home in the summer, do not read books. In California, for example, there are 652,000 non-English-speaking students. They go home and do not speak English. They do not go to the zoo. They do not go on trips, and so forth. When they come back in September, their test scores are lower than they were in June and the gap has got greater between the so-called smarties and the kids who are having trouble.

By going year-round, we found that the students, by being in school and then out a short time, in school and out a short time, continue the growth from September to September. They never had that dropoff over the summer and they continue to grow, so the gap does not come up as much. We found year-round particularly beneficial for what we call our chapter 1, minority-type students.

Mr. Jackson: I asked several questions yesterday about teachers who put their children on day care, especially elementary teachers, where there is a high predominance of women in this province, and about the fact that if I were a young female teacher I would like a year-round education program so that I could return to do three-week blocks of parenting with my child instead of overdosing for the summer and then being away from him or her. That seemed to startle Mr. Ballinger a bit. He had never really put it in context, but he saw it as a benefit.

Last night, I was thinking of a couple of other examples and I want to fly one of those off you. Has there been any support with respect to the whole notion of family breakdown? Our statistics on divorce and separation with children are really quite severe. It strikes me that we have problems with that two-month and two-and-a-half-month period, or the March break, where both parties are fighting over where they are going to go for their vacation and which child gets pulled which way, to go with which parent, the custodial or the noncustodial parent.

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It strikes me that a system like this would allow four windows in a given year that the families could well plan and order up. With the growing number of families in our schools who have this problem, it strikes me that there may be a whole series of reasons to promote the notion, which are child-centred and reduce the tension as opposed to compounding it. I can tell you that just from teachers who are separated, this is a serious problem that they have.

Dr. Glines: I would agree with you and support what you are saying. In California, we have all kinds of those problems with single parents, with both parents working, latchkey students. We have parents driving two hours to work and two hours back every day and not getting home until 7 or 7:30 p.m. and the kids are home alone from 2:30 or 3 p.m. till 6 or 7 p.m.

The day care programs are just growing by leaps and bounds in the state. The divorce rate is over 50 per cent. With all our minority families, teenage pregnancy is tremendously high and so forth. We feel that year-round does benefit those kinds of conditions. The districts that have gone year-round have really gone out of their way to try to help with the day care, the latchkey and adjustments for families that need to have special concerns addressed, such as split parents and so forth. I think that in the long run year-round is very supportive.

On the comment you made before about the 45-15 and three weeks off for teachers and kids, we have seen quite a bit of that really in California. We do have parents who request their kids on different tracks. Assuming the mother was not working or she takes some time off, she could spend some time with Billy because he likes sports, some time with Susie because she likes art, some time separately as an individual and some time with Sally because she likes something else.

I think all of your concerns and/or suggestions are really good and right on, and I could support them. I think year-round does help those areas and we have had some success in addressing them in our better districts.

Child care is always raised as a question by the parents: "What about our child care?" I guess the easiest, quickest example that I give in a speech is that we have had year-round for 20 years now, and now we have 400 schools. We do not have any problems with child care in those schools. We had to make some adjustments and changes. The child care pattern had to change. But all the kids have child care and all those parent kind of concerns have been addressed. So we can work it out if we are given the opportunity.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you. I would love to go on longer because I have several other questions. I found your presentation most exciting.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for coming, Dr. Glines. Just before you leave, I wonder if we could have the name of your contact person at the North York professional centre so that perhaps we could get some information about the schools that were represented yesterday and which ones are very much interested in this concept.

Dr. Glines: The house person who established it–I am not sure who he worked through there–was Syd Stephen, who is principal of Baycrest Elementary School in the North York district. He was the one who contacted the people.

In that session, we spent quite a bit of time on some nuts and bolts. I will not bother you now with them. We gave them all kinds of sample calendars on how they work and tried to address many of the issues, like how do you communicate with the parents and things when they are off track, or even football things or soccer. How do you have a band when the trombones are on vacation? What about football? If you have a year-round program, is the quarterback on vacation?

We have addressed those things through legislation and/or our interscholastic athletic federation. Students who are in sports and on the year-round program in high school are eligible as long as they are enrolled in school. They have a choice of being on track or off track during the sports season.

If the football player wants to concentrate on football and come back after school for practice, then he can take vacation during that part of football season. He would not have homework to worry about. He could sleep late and deal with his aches and pains. He comes to practice from three to six. He is still going to school and is finishing everything he is supposed to, since his vacation happens to be near football season, but he is eligible. Of course, he cannot get ineligible and that is nice. Because he is not taking any classes, he cannot fail.

Other of our athletes have chosen to be on track during the sports season because they want to be there all day and not have to come back to school. They want to take some vacation and go somewhere during the vacation season. We have had all kinds of patterns, but there has been no difficulty. Our year-round schools have won championships and done well, had marching bands and orchestras and student councils.

We have to adjust the way we have always done it. It is the same with communicating to teachers. With one third or one fourth always on vacation, how do you have teacher in-service when you cannot get them all together?

Again, those are some of the nuts and bolts. We tried to address some yesterday, but as I said at the conference time, it took even a day or two of the conference just to address those kinds of

issues for interested people so they do not have to reinvent the wheel.

Madam Chairman: Again, I thank you, Dr. Glines. We found you very helpful today. In fact, your enthusiasm is contagious and we very much appreciate the time and effort you have taken to be with us today.

Dr. Glines: I thank you for inviting me back because it is always fun to have a chance to come up here.

Mr. Jackson: Why do you not invite us officially back to California since only our researchers went? We as legislators would love to go.

Mr. Mahoney: In February.

Dr. Glines: We are having our next national year-round conference in February in San Diego. Why do you not come?

Madam Chairman: Sounds wonderful. I think I shall always remember that quote you gave us on the undemocratic nature of our educational system and how it compares with the prisons and marines. That was quite good. Thank you again.

Dr. Glines: Fine. Thank you for inviting me.

Madam Chairman: I have had three members notify me that they will not be available at two o'clock, so with the committee's indulgence I am going to suggest that we reconvene at 2:30 p.m. Depending on the will of the committee, we might like to spend the first 15 or 20 minutes discussing the minister's response to the report of the select committee on education and also our future mandate and directions for the steering committee.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until 2:30 this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 12:09 p.m.

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Hansard
Official Report of Debates
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Length of School Day and School Year
Education Financing

First Session, 34th Parliament
Wednesday, April 19, 1989

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, April 19, 1989

The committee met at 10:17 a.m. in committee room 2.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR

EDUCATION FINANCING
(continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open this session of the select committee on education as we continue to look at the length and organization of the school day and the school year.

Just before we go to our special guest this morning, I would like to make a few announcements, as this is probably going to be our last public forum before going in camera to finish writing our report. I would very much like to thank our pro tem clerk, Tannis Manikel, for all her assistance on the committee. She has done a very able job of filling in for Lynn Mellor, who has been seconded to the Bill 162 committee, whatever one that is. David Cooke is giving me a look of utter disgust.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Not at all. I am in love, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: The other people I would like to express our gratitude to are Bob Gardner and Ann Porter, who have been absolutely fantastic with the research. We have very much relied on their analysis of the California conference and on their background information.

Mr. Mahoney: Somebody had to do it.

Madam Chairman: It was a tough job but somebody had to do it, so I would very much like to thank both Bob and Ann for their participation.

Now, down to the business of the day. I am very much pleased to welcome to our committee Larry Horyna, who is from the Utah State Office of Education in Salt Lake City. Mr. Horyna is a co-ordinator of year-round education for the state of Utah, which is the fastest-growing state in terms of year-round education. According to Bob's and Ann's notes, he is a dynamic and knowledgeable speaker. Without further ado, Mr. Horyna, please proceed. You are welcome to divide your time however you see fit as far as presentation and question-and-answer are concerned.

LARRY HORYNA

Mr. Horyna: If I could just get my motor warmed up a little and maybe make a few statements, I suspect you would then prefer to grill me about things you want to know more than what I might lay out for you.

I am delighted to be here. I am honoured to be here. I have never been to Toronto before. This has been a unique opportunity for me. It is a lovely, wonderful city. I am very impressed with it. I walked around it for about three hours last night and did not get mugged and I am feeling very good about that. There are maybe only two places in North America you could do that, probably Salt Lake City and Toronto.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: That is because the Blue Jays were getting mugged in the ballpark.

Mr. Horyna: As noted, I am with the Utah State Office of Education. I have been in that particular state for only about four years, so in case any of you had the question lingering in the back of your mind, "Is he or isn't he?" he is not of the predominant religion in the state of Utah.

It has been a rather interesting experience for me being in the state government in Utah, which is the fastest-growing state in the United States in terms of student enrolment in public schools. It has grown 34 per cent in the decade of the 1980s, and that is in a state that is not very large. About 1.5 million people live in that particular state. Of that number, roughly one out of every three people living in Utah is enrolled in a public school. That means a whole lot of things in terms of dependency ratios, support for schools and those sorts of things, but one out of every three people in Utah is enrolled in a public school.

We have 40 school jurisdictions in Utah, 28 of which are fairly small, less than 3,000 or 4,000. That means we have 12 fairly large divisions, mainly in the Salt Lake area, with the largest school district being about 75,000 youngsters. Therein has been where our experience has begun to evolve in terms of alternative scheduling.

I know that probably a lot of your questions will be regarding year-round education or the extended school year. I would like to say a couple of things about my role and about some other things that are happening. I am responsible for a

special unit in our state education office that has to do with a bunch of so-called reform programs, including: a performance-pay program for teachers–it is about a $40-million program; year-round schools and effective facility use; some productivity initiatives, and some initiatives in technology. A whole range of so-called reform programs operates out of our particular area and I am responsible for that.

I am personally responsible for this year-round school and effective facility-use program, which is a new program that evolved in 1985 out of the Legislature with some small dollars, roughly $1 million a year–the carrot, if you will, to get some school jurisdictions and some individual schools looking at alternatives.

A couple of alternatives come to mind. We do have a crowding problem in about 11 or 12 of our districts. Two patterns have evolved in those districts: year-round education, which we will talk more of later, and another thing called the extended-day program that is somewhere in your packets if you have received them; I see they are in front of you. What I have is a green piece of paper with a listing of schools on both sides. On one side are the year-round schools, with a little information about them, and on the other side there are those schools that are in the so-called extended-day program. There are actually more of those schools.

What that involves is a teacher-developed scheme whereby a school population is really broken into an A group and a B group by whatever characteristics they want to use. It is an overlapping, double shifting of that school. One group comes in at eight in the morning and goes home at two, and one group comes in about 10 in the morning and goes home at four. During the middle part of the day, the place is really crowded. They do things in large groups; maybe physical education, recess, lunch, art and some other courses they do in groups of maybe a 55-to-1 ratio. I do not want to get into that, but you might want to discuss it later. We are into providing incentives and helping districts and schools within districts that want to get into either the extended-day or the extended-year program.

The other thing I would like to mention as we move forward, though, is that something is happening in our rural areas, where the problem is the reverse. In some cases, they are actually losing enrolment and they have financial problems because most school support is local support in the particular state I am living in now. Three of our 40 districts have now gone district-wide to a four-day school week.

What that amounts to is that they have extended four days to make up for the fifth day, so usually school runs from Monday through Thursday, and Friday is a day off. That is a day for all the student activities that happen: athletic events and other kinds of things. It does two things: one, it saves money–roughly 16 per cent of the basic operating costs of a school, because you are not paying custodians, bus drivers and others such as cooks and secretaries and those kinds of folks for that fifth day, so you are saving about 20 per cent right there.

What it has also done, from an educational standpoint, is allow some of our rural youngsters, who are very active youngsters, to avoid losing as many as 25 instructional days a year because of travel to athletic, band, music and student government events that happen. That has been quite popular in some of our rural areas and I think probably more schools will adopt that as we move forward.

The state of Colorado, in case you are interested in that, is way ahead of us. It has about 32 jurisdictions that are now on four-day weeks. It is an interesting concept in itself, but I pointed out to you that it is a way to save money, not a way to house more youngsters, if that is your problem.

Our first year-round school in Utah came about in 1984, and it came about as a design for improving instruction in a particular school in the community of Provo, Utah. Since that time, through the incentives provided by the state and through, I think, some recognition of some advantages to rescheduling our schools, that number has now grown to 41 schools.

I would point out to you that on your list every one of those schools is an elementary school, and by your standards I think most of them would be considered fairly large schools, with as many as 800, 900, 1,000, 1,100 or 1,200 youngsters in an elementary school, kindergarten to grade 5.

Most of those schools are located in urban areas, and for financial reasons–those being that there is no money available to build new schools at this particular moment, and that in 1995 or 1996 we see a levelling off of population in those areas–I think there is a conscious decision on the part of the Legislature not to build new schools, some of which will have to be closed in as early as eight or nine years. If you have gone through a school-closing issue, it is a horrendous issue.

In the fastest-growing state percentage-wise in the United States in terms of student enrolment, last year we built two new elementary schools in Utah. This year, I assume there will be about two

more built. That is all. That is all that is going into that.

We had done a projection in 1985 that between 1985 and 1991 there would be a need for roughly $440-million worth of school sites, school facilities, school additions, noninstructional facilities, etc., bus barns and whatever. That just scared the daylights out of the Legislative Assembly. They knew they did not have that much money, so that triggered this whole development we are now involved in.

As I have indicated, since 1985, the Legislative Assembly every year has given the state office of education roughly $1 million to $1.2 million to make available to local jurisdictions funds for two reasons: one, to study alternative schooling patterns in terms of extended-day or extended-year or whatever. If that community or that jurisdiction looks at that for a period of time, six months or a year, and decides, as a result of that investigation, that it is not going to do anything, that is fine, we say, "Good on you," or we walk away from each other.

However, if they have taken a good look, an in-depth look at their alternatives and said, "We think that some other pattern"–extended day, or year-round or some other pattern it might come up with–"is better and will accommodate more youngsters and will allow us to meet our needs now and in the future," we will come back and provide up to $50,000, this year, to help them go into a developmental stage, at which time they might have some teachers spend some time actually looking at how they would rearrange curriculum. Some of them have had to do some climate-control work in their schools; air-conditioning, if you will. Some of them had to do some minor remodelling and those things. They can use that money for about whatever they need to get ready to implement, and once they have implemented, they are back on their own.

We think that carrot approach has been very beneficial for us and has moved a lot of communities and a lot of schools and a lot of school jurisdictions to look at the alternatives in a very constructive way.

However, the legislative body, in its divine wisdom, two years ago said, "The carrot is not enough," and it got out the stick. The stick was a series; I think you also have a little summary of the three laws they passed.

One of them basically said that if you are in a growing school district, and that applies to 11 or 12 of them, by July 1987 you had to have 25 per cent of your schools on some kind of a capacity-expanding schedule that would increase that capacity by as much as 20 per cent; then by last July another 25 per cent of your elementary schools–I need to add that–and by this July 1 another 25 per cent and by next July another 25 per cent. In other words, if you are in a growing district and cannot get a waiver on it, by next July 100 per cent of your elementary schools must be on a capacity-expanding mode.

The second major law they passed was one that says, "If you're going to build a new school and you're going to ask the state government for any help in doing it"–which most of them, incidentally, do not have to do; they are funded locally–"if you're going to ask the state government to help you in any way to build that new school, you must certify to the state office of education, the state board of education, that the school will operate in some capacity-expanding mode, such as year-round or extended-day."

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The third law was one that had to do with declining enrolment areas. We call it the Salt Lake City and the Ogden law. It really applies to only two of our districts in urban areas that are in a period of decline, where they are operating schools far below capacity. They basically said of any school that is operating at less than 70 per cent capacity, based on a formula they have devised, "You should probably close that school, but if you choose not to close it, you can go ahead and operate it but you won't receive any operating costs from the state."

The result is about the same. You really cannot afford to operate a school in our state without some state support for the operation of that school. To my knowledge, the only school that has been closed to date is a very large high school in Salt Lake City. They had four high schools. They were all operating at around 65 to 70 per cent. They closed one of them and moved the youngsters into the other three, so that now the three remaining are operating at full capacity and the one is sitting there idle. I think it is going to become a community college outreach centre or something.

Those are the three sticks the Legislature put in place. I personally do not think they were terribly effective in motivating local jurisdictions. I think the money was more effective and remains more effective. If anything, I think these laws irritated local jurisdictions to the point where a couple of them almost said: "Okay, we won't comply. Let's see you take the state support away from the operation of our jurisdictions and see if politically that's going to be a wise thing for you to do." That has not come to pass.

I think the laws will sunset next year and will go away. I think we have achieved our purposes. We have more and more schools moving on to alternative schedules. We will have our first junior high schools moving on to a year-round pattern this year. Maybe down the line somewhere we will actually get into high schools, but right now we are pretty much zeroed in on the middle and elementary levels.

There is just one other thing I will say and then I will be quiet and respond to whatever you would like to talk about. I think there are about three things we have done that have been fairly unique in Utah. One is that we have evolved this extended-day program. Again, that was evolved by teachers for a very selfish purpose, enhancing their own salaries, and it has been very effective in doing that. It has not proven to be terribly effective in terms of housing more students.

As a matter of fact, this year for the first time we will see some schools which were traditional schools for 200 years, I assume, and which went a year or two ago towards this extended-day schedule. But they were growing schools and realized they were not meeting their growth needs, so now this year they are making the transition to a year-round kind of pattern so they can realize the 35 per cent growth efficiencies of that.

I am just guessing at this point, but my guess is that within three to four years we will have in Utah some schools that are operating year-round on an extended-day pattern. In other words, you are going to mess with the day and you are going to mess with the year, and by bringing those two economies together you can realize about a 50 per cent increase in capacity of those schools. That sounds ungodly from an operating standpoint, but in fact they are two entirely different kinds of things and will fit together. I just do not care to be running one of those schools myself when they do it and I do not care to have my youngsters in it, but it will work and I think we will see it as we move down the line.

So the extended day is one thing that has happened. The second thing that has happened, and I think maybe Dr. Ballinger or Don Glines talked to you about it, is the so-called Orchard plan which evolved at Orchard Elementary School near Provo, Utah–a different kind of year-round plan where, instead of moving whole classrooms of youngsters out of and into the school on a rotating basis, they moved numbers of youngsters out of each classroom, in and out of the school, on a rotating basis.

Without graphics, it is very difficult to describe how that works, but essentially it is like having 35 youngsters in each schoolroom, but only 28 of them are there on any given day.

It is mind-boggling to think about it, unless you have the capacity within your schools to truly individualize and truly track youngsters in a different kind of way. Those schools that have chosen to do that in our state, of which there are only three, have that capacity. Most schools do not.

The other thing I would mention–I say this, as one of our researchers says, maybe as a weasel-word statement; I am going to weasel-word this one–is that our state has funded a state-wide evaluation of our extended-day and our extended-year programs. Right now, and there are some figures there in front of you, we have some 60,000 youngsters and thousands of teachers involved in these programs. We are going to do this state-wide evaluation. We are not doing it right now. As a matter of fact, it is in the final write-up stages.

Hopefully, by July we will have probably North America's first and only state-wide, funded, in-depth evaluation of these alternative schedules. It will look at everything from student achievement to cost-benefit analysis. I think that is very important as you get into this stuff.

We have local evaluations that have been done and they are very favourable, but not on any kind of state-wide basis.[sic] We need to get parent attitudes and teachers' feelings about things. We need to gather a lot of that kind of information and we are gathering that. We will share this with Bob Gardner or you folks; however you want it. We will be glad to share that with the entire world once we have it. We do not have it in hand at this moment, but we will.

With that, my motor is now running and I would be glad to respond to any questions you have.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to Mr. Johnston for a question, I have one of my own. When you were talking about the reform programs, you mentioned one that I think you called the performance-pay teachers' program.

Mr. Horyna: It is called a career-ladder program.

Madam Chairman: Would you just briefly outline that?

Mr. Horyna: That is a hard one to outline briefly. We are starting our sixth year of the so-called career-ladder program, which is a program that came out of our legislative body. It was designed to do one basic thing and that was

to pay teachers more, but it was to pay them more for one of two things: working more effectively or working more; in other words, longer or more effectively.

That is done in four ways. Teachers in local jurisdictions write out a local plan that is then funded based on a formula. They can extend their contract year by as much as half of the money they get. In other words, they could take half of that money and extend the teacher contracts for additional days to do planning and parent conferencing and that sort of thing.

They could use some of that money for what we call job enlargement–extra pay for extra work–where they would take on committee assignments, develop curricula, maybe tutor youngsters or teach adults. Whatever they choose to do, they can do that by teaching more and they can get paid extra for doing that.

The third aspect has to do with differentiating their status within a school and paying them for those status levels. Those come in many forms and the districts call them levels A, B, C and D or levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or assistant teacher, associate teacher, professional teacher, master teacher; whatever terminology they want to use. But they are paid for differentiating their role a little bit.

The top one is the one you asked about: performance pay. There is a performance bonus element that is based on two factors. It is based on formal evaluation, and I might add at this point, formal evaluation of teachers. Our state has improved at least 3,000 per cent in the four years I have been there; not because I have been there but because of this performance-pay program. It is also based on student progress or student achievement, as measured by things other than achievement tests.

Without getting very complex, maybe that is all I ought to say about it, other than that it is a very lucrative program for the districts. They do not have to do it. It is a voluntary program, but every school jurisdiction has done it from day one and they will continue to do it because it is very lucrative. Even our smallest jurisdiction, which is a little school district with 173 kids–kindergarten through grade 12–receives about $26,000 from the state to operate the career ladder program. A big jurisdiction may receive as much as $4 million or $5 million. It is for extra work or better work. I will stop right there.

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Mr. D. S. Cooke: What is the range of pay?

Mr. Horyna: In the state?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Yes.

Mr. Horyna: It is very low. Utah is one of the lowest-paying states in the country. I do not have good figures off the top of my head, but I would say the average starting salary is probably around $16,000 to $17,000. The top, on average, is $27,000 to $28,000 and the overall average is around $23,500.

Madam Chairman: Just one other quick question about the Orchard plan: You said that in order for it to be effective, the schools would have to be able to individualize. Do you have any statistics on what the pupil-teacher ratio would be in those three schools that have implemented the Orchard plan?

Mr. Horyna: I think it is pretty much what the state ratio would be, which is around 24 or 25 to one.

Mr. Jackson: Elementary or secondary?

Mr. Horyna: It is elementary.

Madam Chairman: So they have not necessarily individualized by increasing the number of teachers.

Mr. Horyna: No, not at all, but they have in terms of assessing kids individually as to where they are and where they need to go to be able to work with them on an individualized basis. If you can assess where they are, then you can somehow prescribe where they need to go, but you have to have a really good student management system in place to do that. One thing that being very poor and having a lot of kids has done for Utah which has been beneficial is that it has really caused the state and the legislative body to be very conscious about how we can better use technology for doing some things, including student tracking and student recordkeeping.

Again, I am not a native, so I am not ballyhooing the thing particularly, but as I look around, in terms of the use of technology throughout the United States, Utah has to be right up near the top in terms of using laser disc technology and certainly computers. What people usually think about in terms of technology is computers in the schools. We have buckets of those, but we are using laser disc technology now. We have many distance-learning technologies: microwave, satellites, sometimes just voice transmissions. We would have a good teacher in one district teaching to students maybe throughout the state in a particular subject matter, via public television, microwave or the satellite; all that stuff.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Would it be possible for you to send us some documentation on the career-ladder program?

Mr. Horyna: Sure. That is one thing we have buckets of. We have a lot of documentation on that one. It has been a very politically volatile one, as you might well understand. The teachers' association is not a union in our particular state.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So they do not have the right to strike?

Mr. Horyna: That is correct. They do not have to submit to binding arbitration. I have also just said that we have some of the poorest-paid teachers in the United States and we are not too proud of that. Maybe that is part of it; I am not too sure.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The teacher evaluation side of that would be very useful for us, as a committee, to have for the future.

Mr. Horyna: I would be very glad to send it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If there is an easy kind of summary about what you are doing in terms of student tracking through technology, that would be interesting. One of the things we discovered in our first set of hearings was a very poor database on student tracking, essentially. Different modes are being used all across the province, so the kind of information we have on dropouts, for instance, really depends on which board you are in in terms of how they define a dropout and that kind of thing. Would you have anything that would assist us?

Mr. Horyna: Yes, I do. As a matter of fact, we have just developed a new state plan for students at risk. Dropouts are one outcome of that; being at risk. As a result of that, I happen to serve on that committee. One thing that plan did was define once and for all a formula, a way of computing dropout statistics that would be uniform throughout our state. I do not have that formula in my head, but it is in the report and I will be glad to share it with you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That would be very helpful for us, it really would, as we proceed along. Let me just ask a couple of things on the statistical thing. What is the percentage of kids in the private school system? Is there much because of the–

Mr. Horyna: It is almost an indiscernible figure. Utah has the lowest percentage of private schools or parochial schools in the United States. I guess I am a long way from home right now so I could say that there are those in Utah who would say that the private schools are really the public schools because of their mix of religions, etc., whereas the public schools are really what would be called private schools in other states because of the heavy dominance of Mormon culture; maybe 60 or 70 per cent. That is a little bit of an overstatement and one that would probably get me in a great deal of strife back home, but it is interesting.

The whole school system in the state of Utah was a Mormon-operated school system at one time. Then it became a public school system, and it is a public school system by any definition. But the bottom line, the answer to your question, is that we have virtually none. I could count the private and parochial schools on both hands and both feet. There are virtually none.

Of the ones that have been started–there were a couple recently by Wicat Systems Inc., which is an outfit in instructional computers that sells them all over the United States. They are headquartered in Utah but nobody in Utah can afford their systems, so they started a couple of private schools using their computerized instructional systems. One of them is very successful, but the other one just went broke about three months ago and had to close, just because there are not enough people in Utah with enough money to pay private school tuition, which they would have to do to attend that kind of school. It went belly up already.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is very interesting.

You talk a little bit about the extended day in terms of the pedagogy involved, the theory about the length of time students can learn, especially at an elementary-panel level here, perhaps, where our community has essentially been telling us not to mess around very much with our present system of a five-and-a-half-hour day. When you start talking about that extended-day approach that has been taken throughout the state, what are the actual instructional hours that are then involved with that and what were the pedagogical presumptions of that?

Mr. Horyna: You will have to clarify for me. I mentioned two things. I mentioned the four-day week, which is obviously a much extended day, and I mentioned the extended day as a separate thing, which is the overlapping double shift, and I need to know which–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Let's deal with the four-day week first.

Mr. Horyna: We have a five-and-a-half-hour school day, exclusive of lunch. You figure you have to make up another five and a half hours in four days, so what are you adding is another hour and 15 minutes a day.

Those are all in rural areas, and I need to clarify that. They are all in rural areas where they quite often have long busing situations and where they are losing a lot of instructional time with

kids because of the other school-related activities.

It does make a long day, particularly for young kids. For some of those kids, if they are having to ride a bus 45 minutes each way in some of those areas, they are on the bus maybe at 6:30 in the morning and they are getting home about six at night; it makes a long day.

The tradeoff on that is that every week has a three-day weekend. I am sure it is the same here in Ontario as it is in Utah or any place that has rural areas, and if you are in a rural area, to go to the doctor, to go and do banking, to attend events, whatever, it quite often means you are going to have to pull kids out. There are a lot of things you cannot do on Saturdays and Sundays, and that is true for teachers and others.

The problem is that it does make an awfully long day and they have had to rearrange that day a little bit. On the other hand, their absenteeism rates have gone down significantly for both students and teachers. "I've got to go to the doctor, so I've got to take a personal day on Friday and go to the doctor"; or Monday. Now they do not have to do that because they have that three-day weekend every week.

Mr. Jackson: There is no Sunday shopping in Utah.

Mr. Horyna: Grocery shopping. Not very much else.

Mr. Jackson: No retail.

Mr. Cureatz: We are trying to keep that alive.

Madam Chairman: With great difficulty.

Mr. Jackson: We just passed a law that will allow more open access on Sunday, so the argument of access points–

Mr. Cureatz: The next time you come back, you will not feel safe in Toronto.

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Interjections.

Madam Chairman: I think that we are becoming somewhat distracted here. Back to Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It might be possible to get back to the question along here. Where does homework fit into that kind of extended day and a four-day week? Have you a policy for elementary-panel homework that is state-wide or is that left up to the jurisdiction, as we do it?

Mr. Horyna: No, it is totally a local thing. If I could just add a note about it, the thing about the four-day week that is kind of bad–there is good and bad with it–is that if a youngster has to miss a day of school, he is missing a quarter of the week. If you miss, it can add up really quickly when you are losing that much at a whack.

However, as I indicated, the attendance patterns have improved, as has been the case with all of the patterns I have mentioned: the four-day week, the extended day and the year-round in particular. Both teacher and student attendance patterns have greatly improved as a result of that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We hear that from each of the systems that have gone that way. What about the–

Mr. Cureatz: May I have a supplementary? Has it improved because of the more regular breaks?

Mr. Horyna: I do not know. We are going to have the answer to that by the summer, I think, through our research study. I think it is a bunch of things. On the four-day, I think people realize that if they miss a day they are missing a quarter of the week and so they do not miss it. They will be a little bit sick on Thursday, knowing they are going to have Friday to go.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What about the notion of extracurricular activities being put on to the Friday mostly? At least that is what I gather.

Mr. Horyna: Totally.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How, then, does that work for the rural kid?

Mr. Horyna: If they want to be involved, they are going to have to give up the day. They are going to have to go and travel to their ball games and to their band things and all that, but the four days of school are going to be four days of school. They are not going to be four days of activities and concerts and assemblies and all that. Just about all the extracurricular stuff is placed outside of that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is participation good on those events?

Mr. Horyna: Sure.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And you have all the ancillary services of busing and that kind of thing that tie into it?

Mr. Horyna: Yes. The only people whom it affects negatively are the teachers who are responsible for those things, because they say: "Hey, it is great to run a four-day week and everybody's got a three-day weekend, but I don't. I'm taking the ball team Friday night and Saturday night to games. Isn't there a supplement here for doing that?" Most districts have resisted that at this point.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: A final question would be around the fact that at this point you have done

it only in the elementary panel and you are now looking at the middle schools. What has your experience been with two things: one, transition for kids moving back into the old-style organization, and two, what about the families that may have kids in both?

Mr. Horyna: The second one in particular is a tremendous question. It is a question we really have had to deal with in Utah because of the Mormon culture, because of the large families and the emphasis on family and all that. It is the one question that keeps coming up and keeps coming up. It is declining as we go along, because people have discovered that their families did not disintegrate and all that because they had kids scattered around through the age levels.

But it is a problem when you have three youngsters in an elementary on a year-round, and maybe they are even on different tracks, and you have a couple of youngsters in the middle on a traditional schedule and maybe a couple in high school. Families with six, eight and nine children are not too unusual in Utah. For that reason, I do not think we have any systems where you do not have a choice.

If you are in a jurisdiction that has a lot of year-round–Jordan school jurisdiction is one that has 18 year-round schools; it also probably has 20 that are not year-round–they have tried to pair up, to match up sister schools. If you just cannot tolerate this from a personal or family standpoint, then you have the right to transfer your kid to this traditional schedule because then your whole family will be on the same routine. That has been the choice, but virtually less than one per cent has used it.

I think what people have discovered is that if you have kids in secondary schools, and probably some of you do, as I do, they kind of run a different schedule anyway, so what difference does it really make. They are in a different space or world or universe; whatever. That really has not been a factor. The only problem it has raised is that some of them have had to use their older youngsters for child care for their younger ones. Again, with all of that there has been very little opting-out, as it were, and a great deal of opting-in.

Unfortunately, all the schools that have gone year-round were crowded and did not have much room for opting-in; however, they all have gigantic waiting lists. I was in a year-round school just last week and we had a visitor, a principal in from Florida. I asked the principal, "How much staff turnover have you had in the last four years since you have been year-round?" She said "None." They have not lost one staff member, which is very unusual for any situation.

She said, "We now have a waiting list of 58 teachers standing in line to come and teach in this school." I asked: "Why is that? Are they all getting extended salaries or are they all working extended contracts?" She said: "No. As a matter of fact, none of them has chosen to do that this year." She has not one teacher who is on extended contract. They just like the schedule or they like the more frequent breaks. They like going to Disney World in February and stuff like that.

That is our case throughout our state: there is a waiting list for all of our alternative-scheduled urban schools for both teachers and students. The issue of day care was a straw person or a straw man that was built and it really has not come to pass. People say, "Well, I won't be able to find the child care for my youngster." In fact, it is easier to find child care for three weeks at a time than it is for–

Mr. Jackson: Three months.

Mr. Horyna: –three months at a time.

Also, there are some parents now who, because of their Mormonism and because of their emphasis on family, have said, "This is really nice." Some parents have purposely put their youngsters on different tracks so they can give them individual time when they are off. They have that one child and can give that kid more personal attention.

We had one principal of a year-round school who has done that. He has six youngsters in his own schools and he has them on six different schedules. I said, "God, that would be horrendous." He said: "It is wonderful. My wife is going to be sane again."

The other part of your question–

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Did kids complain when they went for the full year?

Mr. Horyna: That was the other part of the question. I raised that question the other day of our researcher and I said, "Are we going to get any indications of this?" He said, "I think so." We will have this year, for the first time, some youngsters who had never been in a traditional school, who will be moving to the middle school. They have been in year-round schedules since they were kindergarteners. They have no choice at this point in time. They cannot go to a year-round secondary school because there are none in the districts where they live.

All we have right now are subjective responses from kids who really would prefer–the school year becomes so long if you are used to doing it

another way; summer becomes so long and boring if you are used to doing it another way. It would be interesting when some of these kids get to be our age and they say: "Yes, I had that experience when I was a youngster. Why are all schools not operating in this other pattern?"

Charles Ballinger, I am as certain as I am sitting here, made probably quite an argument to you the other day about, "How do you justify the traditional school year in terms of educational pedagogy or anything else?" I think that question is being asked more and more out our way. We have enough of it going on around that the people are saying: "Why would you want your kid in a traditional school year, not having him get formal instruction for three months out of the year?" We do not shut down churches and we do not shut down anything else for three months, but we shut down the public schools. I am not going to make Charles's argument. I am sure he made it very well when he was here.

I guess the answer to your question is we do not know yet but we hope to.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much.

Mr. Jackson: Mr. Johnston covered the questions I had, Larry, with respect to your private schools. That is interesting information.

What I was interested in was the three schools you specifically referenced where they have the Orchard plan, which I believe you referred to. You indicated that it was a function of being able to track a student successfully in individualized programs. I would like you to expand on how they were able to do that. What were the distinctive factors that allowed them to do that successfully? Was it an optimum size or was it the relative wealth of that school district?

Mr. Horyna: No.

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Mr. Jackson: Was it the willingness of the staff? Tracking student performance and individualizing programs are highly sought after objectives in education. When you can so clearly enunciate a program that has that as its hallmark it is fairly significant.

Mr. Horyna: Yes. This could probably be a very long answer because that is a very complex question.

There are two other related things going on in Utah. They are probably not unique to Utah. We do have a new state-approved core curriculum across K-12, so that specifies certain minimum outcomes at certain levels. That is at various stages of implementation throughout our state.

We have another thing that is very prominent in our state right now. It is called outcome-base education or mastery of learning, where regardless of seat time, if you can master certain concepts you are done with that course of study. These particular schools in the Alpine school district, Orchard school and its two compatriots that have gone into the 60-15, what we call Rainbow Orchard plan, had really adopted that core curriculum, spelled out their student outcomes in a way that was beyond what the norm is in our state and adopted some of the principles of outcome-based education to the point where they could say, on an individual basis that yes, Johnny has mastered 80 per cent of these basic concepts, in social studies for example, "and we know that is where he is at this moment in time.

If they go off-track for three weeks or 15 days, when they come back they know exactly where they are and they can begin to plug them back into the curriculum wherever they happen to be at that point in time. It is a matter of having clearly stated outcomes, I think, for individual courses of study and knowing where kids are at along that continuum.

We have another school right down the road–I should not even mention this one to you; we count it as a year-round school because in fact it is, but it is one of a kind in our state. It is called Grant school. It is a smaller elementary school. What they have done is run school 243 days a year, and the youngsters, on a daily basis, choose which 180 days they want to go to school.

Mr. Jackson: We heard about this yesterday.

Mr. Horyna: Okay. Obviously, it costs more to run a school that way, because they pay teachers more to teach 240 days, but the way they do it is they use interns from the university. They are paid a kind of stipend, $4,000 a year or something. That is saving the $24,000 teacher's salary. Then they take the money and divide it among the other teachers.

The problem with that is, over a period of time, as teacher salaries go up, eventually you are going to have a whole school full of interns and one teacher, I guess, because you paint yourself right into a corner when you do that; and they are. It is a small school, and I think they have six interns in there this year. Pretty soon parents and others will say: "Just a minute. This has gone too far."

The reason I raise the instance is that they do the same thing. When that kid walks out of the school that day they know exactly where he is at on a daily basis. So if he does not come back for two weeks, when he comes back in, he grabs his

portfolio and the teacher looks. That is where he or she is at and away they go. That just boggles the mind of most traditional school folks, to think that you could do that; but they do it. They have been doing it for a good number of years now as a matter of course, individually tracking kids on a regular basis.

Some of it has to do with being able to do that electronically. That helps a lot, to be able to punch the computer and it will tell you where that kid is in terms of maths skills or whatever; but another part is just a commitment from the staff to do that.

Mr. Jackson: Very interesting.

Mr. Horyna: I want to make one other point, because it is fairly significant and I failed to mention it a while ago; that is, I think right now our state and our state board and our Legislature are fairly enlightened in terms of trying to get away from the concept of seat time as meaning anything to anybody.

They passed a measure just a couple of months ago that basically says that if a youngster has all his required credits at the end of his 11th year of school he can be graduated. He does not have to sit around for another year to gain another year of seat time. He can graduate, and if it can graduate him early, the district can claim its state funding for that youngster for his 12th year, even though the kid has gone.

It is a bonus to the district to push those accelerated kids through, but it is a two-ended carrot in that, also, a fourth of the state support for that youngster will go to the youngster, to the school of his or her choice, as a tuition credit. I do not think we are going to have large numbers of kids doing it, but the possibility that it is there is a signal, I think, to the state that seat time is no longer a critical element.

Now, I say that just to get into the point I wanted to make; that is, our predominant pattern of year-round education in the state of Utah right now is what we call a modified 45-15 plan. I do not want to tell you a lot about what a 45-15 is, but the difference is that it is modified.

They have added 16 minutes to the school day and they have reduced the school year from 180 days down to 170 or 172 days–they picked up the extra 16 minutes a day, although they do not mean anything–and that allows them, on the schedule of things then, to basically shut that school down from the end of June to about July 26.

This gets back to the area of your question. One of the things we had to do was to try to figure out some way there could be a common time for family vacations and whatever. That was a big concern. By modifying this, shortening the school year and extending the school day very slightly, we could work it out that you could close that school down for about three and a half weeks in the middle of the summer.

This has probably relieved 90 per cent of whatever criticism we had, because three and a half weeks is more, historically, than most of our parents take for family vacations anyway. So there is that period. We can say we have a lot of year-round, but in fact our year-round schools, for the most part, are closed for about three and a half weeks in the summer for a common vacation time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Can I ask a supplementary on the 16 minutes? It just seems to me that my memory of school–which is fast slipping away from me at this stage–you often lost five minutes in each class without any trouble.

Mr. Haggerty: In the hallways.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: In the hallways, people getting in. Sixteen minutes sounds like a very artificial amount and probably does not really change the instructional day at all.

Mr. Horyna: It does not change it a bit, no, it probably really does not; and in fact, they do not have to do it. The local school jurisdictions are very schooled to the notion that they somehow have to run schools 180 days a year for five and a half hours a day exclusive of lunch, and they do not have to. They do not believe us, although we keep telling them that they do not have to. All you have to do is be able to certify that you have achieved the core curriculum objectives for those students for that time.

Now that people are starting to believe us parents will come in and say: "Hey, I have had my youngster in piano lessons since she was five years old and she has had them for eight or 10 years. Do I really have to enrol her in a fine arts credit to get half a fine arts credit in public school before she can graduate? Can I somehow get a certificate of credit for this?"

Or the youngster has been involved in gymnastics or soccer; whatever it was, an out-of-school thing. Do they have to take a physical education class when they are world-class gymnasts or whatever? Is there not some kind of equivalency here? There is. They are doing more of that. If it meets a core curriculum objective then they can get a checkoff.

I think that is the way the world is going, at least the part of the world I am familiar with now; more competency-based, mastery-based; an

outcome-based educational system as opposed to seat time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of the things that strikes me about the whole business this raises is that we have an artificial system at the moment in terms of the length of time it takes to cover curriculum that we use in a regular school year. It seems to me, except for what you are saying now, most of the full-school-year, extended-day stuff we have been hearing has bought the same kind of rationale. They are still tying themselves to this 180, 185, 190 days or whatever it might be for a jurisdiction, as gospel and not looking at the sort of functional outcomes.

Mr. Horyna: And the fact that kids, people, learn at different rates. If we really believe what we know about how people learn, we know that they do not do it all magically in a 185-day box in five-and-a-half-hour days; but having a reliable way of assessing that has been the bugaboo, I think. To this point we had no way to do that. I think we have some ways now. It is interesting.

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Mr. Haggerty: I am rather intrigued at the discussion this morning, particularly from our witness from Utah. I have two questions, but I want to reflect upon something I said back a few years ago in 1969 and 1970. I suggested that the Minister of Education, who was Bill Davis at the time–

Mr. Cureatz: Oh God, don't bring him up.

Mr. Haggerty: You said it, Sam; I didn't. I was trying to be polite.

Madam Chairman: I would note for the record that it was a member of the Conservative Party who made that statement.

Mr. Haggerty: I suggested then that we should be looking at a different pattern in meeting the educational needs. At that time I was a member of a school board and we were building schools and closing them and building them and closing them. I suggested then that I thought we should extend the school term to year-round because of the modern schools we were building with air-conditioners and so on.

The example I used was that many of the persons employed in industry today, for example, could not have the summer months off, in other words when their children were off, for a period of vacation. I thought that if you were working in the trades, for example, sometimes in the winter months when you get the time off you are stuck at home in the cold winter months up here. They should be able to take their children out of school and head for Florida and places like that.

Mr. Cureatz: Disney World.

Mr. Haggerty: Disney World was mentioned here. That is correct. I suggested that maybe this is what we should be looking at.

I also brought it to the attention of the committee at the time that I had a friend, and his youngster and another youngster were fatally injured in an automobile accident in travelling up to northern Ontario, to Sault Ste. Marie to go on a fishing trip on a weekend. The point I was raising was that we work from Monday to Friday, and the same thing in schools, the majority of people work that routine, and everybody is on the roads in the province driving like a bat out of a hell to get up north to the cottage or fishing or something like that on weekends.

The congestion on our highways causes a number of accidents. We have not kept pace with the congestion on our highways today in Ontario. The accidents and fatalities are there because people are still trying to travel up north. When you look at it, you could say, "Yes, there is a benefit here to the taxpayers by extending the school hours or putting them on a semester term, going that route without building new schools."

You might say there is a savings in automobile insurance too, reducing the fatalities on the roads. I listed a whole number of things through which I thought there was a benefit to extending the school term to 12 months a year.

Mr. Cureatz: That was 20 years ago.

Mr. Haggerty: I had it raised during the 1971 election by an interesting opponent of mine. It was an NDP member and he took me to task on it, but I came back and said, "You know, you're missing the point. If you want to reduce accidents in the province, the safest time to drive on a road in Ontario right today is on a Thursday." There are less accidents, that is the point I raised.

I am coming to the two questions I want to raise. Due to the present pressure on certain communities within the province in need of new schools, I was interested in one of your proposals. This is under "Alternatives to Overcrowded or Underutilized Schools": rent additional classroom space in the community; and then you have church, business and industry.

I find that very interesting. As we look today, just around Toronto we see high-rise buildings going up and we see houses going up by the thousands around this community, and no new schools. Maybe the committee should be looking at it the same way we look at business. I am thinking of the five per cent–

Mr. Cureatz: They are office towers.

Mr. Haggerty: That is right, the five per cent bonus given to municipalities for park purposes. Maybe that five per cent should be applied when they put up an office tower and a certain level of that floor space should be allocated for school purposes. I just bring that to your attention.

Mr. Cureatz: Twenty years from now you will be saying how you brought this up.

Mr. Haggerty: I hope it is not going to be 20 years, Sam, because I will not be around.

The other question is, since you have gone to the extended school term in Utah, has it had any adverse effect upon the education for the student in the school system? Has it improved any or has it just remained at the status quo?

Mr. Horyna: I think we will be able to answer that question better this summer when our data come in, but in the local studies that have been done in the districts–and some of them have done local assessments because they had to come back to their local boards with some evidence of what they were doing–the results have been very favourable.

I think it has to do with the continuity of things. I think it has to do with not having the long summer layoff. I think probably a little has to do with a kind of halo effect too, because they are kind of special schools and they get special visitors and the kids get thinking they are special, and their parents are pretty supportive and involved.

The other thought I had is that the first schools that went year-round, and to a large degree the first schools that have gone to the extended day program in Utah, were–are–suburban, very white and very upper-middle-class; very homogeneous, if you will; very good schools to start with. They were some of the most outstanding schools in the state but they were in high-growth areas and now they are outstanding schools that are on year-round, which is unlike California, in many respects, where many of their year-rounds are in inner-city areas where they have a high Hispanic, whatever–you heard those things–populations; disadvantaged populations, if you will. That is not the case in Utah. Those participating had been good schools to start with.

We even hesitate to throw too much data out, because somebody is going to say, "Obviously year-round has made this such an outstanding school." The fact of the matter is that it was an outstanding school before it went year-round. We have some schools that are performing at the 98th or 99th percentile; there is only one way you can go from there and that is down, so why say it is the schedule that made them that? They were there five years ago anyway; the schedule is kind of extraneous to that.

What we can say without hesitation is that the schedule has not hurt the outcomes in any school. It has not hurt student achievement. No kid has gotten warts or anything from being on a year-round schedule. It has not hurt any youngsters.

Our data are like data from elsewhere, I think, that would say that middle- and lower-level students, who also usually happen to be lower-income, seem to do better in a continuous learning situation. For kids at the middle and higher levels, it is kind of a wash: It is no better, it is no worse, but they are not hurt by it.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mahoney just asked for a brief supplementary.

Mr. Mahoney: A kind of supplementary. Aside from the kids, what were the problems you had in selling the concept in the first place to what would strike me as being a very traditionalist state, in many ways; and what is the subsequent result? Did everyone go: "Gee, we were wrong about that. We didn't have to worry about that"?

Mr. Horyna: We get this even internally and from our own Legislature. They say: "Does every neighbourhood or every community have to go through this planning process? You've been through it enough. Can't you just say, 'Here are the goods and here are the bads' and do it?"

I say no. There is a process every community has to go through, or every neighbourhood. We are willing to put $5,000 into every school in the state of Utah to let it plan and look at this, because that ownership, that revelation I guess, that comes out of doing that, that discovery, is particularly important. If year-round continues to develop and is there for the next 50 years, I am sure the school that comes on the 51st year will say, "Is this going to destroy our families, and do this and this and this? "You are going to go through that every time.

In terms of your question, though, I think what happened in Utah is that it was a legislative initiative, so that gave it some advance credibility. It was not a university or some crazy storefront group out promoting it. It was the legislative body that was saying: "Hey, given our enrolment, given our needs for facilities, the budget doesn't match. We've got to look at another alternative for dealing with this, and if we build more schools that means our libraries aren't going to be full of books and we're not going to buy the computers because we're not going to have the money. It's a choice situation:

You can't do both, and we don't want to have to close schools five or six years down the line."

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It came from there. Our governor was very supportive of it. He was on a national governors' task force that talked about extended use of school facilities. He was vice-chairman of that task force, and one of the things it talked about was extended patterns of school use.

Perhaps the most important factor right now, though, is the fact, as Bob knows and Monica knows–they were in San Diego at the conference–that our state superintendent of public instruction, our commissioner or whatever, the equivalent of your Minister of Education, has five youngsters in a year-round school. He is very knowledgeable. He spoke at this conference.

He is knowledgeable on it from the standpoint of a parent and he is a very articulate gentleman. He can go out and speak on television and before groups about the benefits and the reasons for year-round education in Utah and speak as a parent. He is probably the only state commissioner or superintendent of public instruction in the United States who has ever had a single youngster in a year-round situation. It makes it very credible when you have the legislative body and the legislative leadership and you have the governor and you have the state superintendent and you have the major media outlets, radio and television and newspapers, very supportive.

Again, as somebody who is somewhat of an outsider to Utah, I have been rather amazed that an innovation of this magnitude has gone so smoothly. As a matter of fact, my friends in California tell me–Charlie Ballinger tells me–some of their most resistive people in California are Mormon communities, so they are real curious to know what is going on in Utah. How can Utah move so fast when Mormons not living in Utah are not that supportive? I hope that answers your point.

Mr. Mahoney: Yes. Thanks.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Let's go back to the four-day thing a bit. I am just trying to think about this extracurricular problem, especially in rural Ontario. I remember my travel time used to be my first–besides chores and things, which we did beforehand, the first bus was at quarter past seven. The bus home left at four or quarter past four and we got home by six or 6:30 most of the time, and I played football. Coming to this business of just having the Friday for extracurricular, what I had to do then was miss the bus, stay till 5:30 or so and try to get a ride back out and get home at six or 6:30, often by thumb.

I wonder what this does. If your major extracurricular time is going to be focused in now on a Friday, what does that do to things like team sports and bands and those kinds of things, where you have to practise the rest of the time as well in order to be able to perform on the Friday?

Mr. Horyna: They are building it into that elongated school day. Instead of after school, maybe it is the seventh period or the eighth period that is activities.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, I see.

Mr. Horyna: It is a part of that, and you are given a credit for that; maybe a fine arts credit for the band and a PE credit for the football or whatever it may be.

Again, these are very small places. I have often thought the four-day thing would be a better innovation for an urban area where you get rid of the busing problem. I have never seen it in an urban situation. It is always in very rural, isolated situations. But we have places, and I am sure you do too, where even to go play a football game kids have to leave at 10 in the morning to travel almost all day in a school bus to get to the place to play. They get home at four the next morning, and that is usually on a Thursday night or a Friday night or sometimes both.

In a small school, the other thing that does is that when you pull out a couple of coaches and you pull out 40 kids, plus cheerleaders and whatever, then the rest of the school might as well shut down. You have taken the heart right out of the institution. The kids are kind of babysat for the day and the rest of them are off doing their thing.

We do not know where the four-day week is going. We are not able to support it a lot, because it does not expand capacity. We did for a while, but then they said that is just something they can do if they need to save money. We have some poor districts trying to do that to save a few dollars. On the other hand we have big-drawing districts trying to expand the use of their facilities, so we have to deal with both of them.

I did want to say one thing about air-conditioning. I do not know a lot about your climate, but we have winter and we have hot summers. In one of the handouts. I think there are 10 schools listed where they did not have air-conditioning and they made a choice to retrofit, as we call it, some of their schools that went year-round. We had thought, and I guess I had thought as a layman in this regard, that it would be very expensive to air-condition

schools. My conception was central air conditioning, that you have to rip the thing out and put in the air-conditioning ducts and all that.

What has happened in Utah is that the engineering firms and the architectural firms that are involved in doing that have–as you can see from that sheet if you are looking at it, the most expensive air-conditioning job in this particular district is $164,000. That may sound like a lot of money, but it is not very much in the scale of things as opposed to perhaps buying some portable units or whatever alternative you would use to expand the school. With $164,000 you can put in some rooftop units or window units, swamp coolers if you will, or small individualized units. It is not a lot of money in the scale of things.

All of a sudden the air-conditioning costs are not as prohibitive a factor as they once were. I think when we first started they would say: "Yes. That's wonderful. If you have an air-conditioned school you can do it, but you can't afford to air-condition an existing school." It is not as expensive as we thought it would be and a lot of them are doing it.

The good thing coming out of that is that I do not think we will ever see another school built in Utah that is not air-conditioned. We built into the danged things a prohibitive factor that just pretty much excludes their use for a large percentage of the time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other thing was a four-day week. It seems to me that if you move to that and you have the school organized to have other kinds of functions taking place in the school on the Friday, again air-conditioning would make a lot of sense.

What just fascinated me is how a school could be named after the god of wine, Bacchus.

Mr. Horyna: Is that what Bacchus is? I thought it was probably a Mormon saint or something.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Maybe it is a Mormon saint; I do not know.

Madam Chairman: Was he not the god of drunkenness or something?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I did not want to put it that way.

Madam Chairman: And debauchery.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: He did enjoy wine and other things. He was known as the Steve Mahoney of the ancient world.

Mr. Furlong: It is interesting that only you knew that.

Mr. Mahoney: From a former life.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am a classical scholar. What can I tell you?

Mr. Horyna: One other comment I would like to make is that in my particular position, I get a lot of visibility out of working with all the programs I mentioned, but particularly this one. I guess that is why I am here, because I get some visibility out of it. A really interesting evolution, or revolution I think, is happening in a fairly small state where the population is kind of concentrated in a small area. At least once a week my phone rings and it will be, say the merchandising person from J. C. Penny or one of the other stores. They will say: "You've been referred to us. How many youngsters will be going back to school on July 26?" I say X thousand, 30,000; they are all in that area. "Oh. We were thinking about the back-to-school sales we have historically done in August." Or my phone rings and it is the local amusement park and they say: "How many youngsters are on holiday or on vacation the end of April? We have traditionally not opened till after the end of May and all of a sudden–" The ski areas: "How many youngsters are off during this week in February? Which schools? We'd like to send a flyer to them because we're going to have a super-duper ski special for these youngsters who are going to be off."

Commercial recreation, the commercial operations, the private entrepreneurs, the day care people, are saying: "Hey, we have some vacancies here. If there are some first-graders who are going to be off track and their parents are needing day care services, our recreation centre or our day care centre would like to have some way to publicize it." It is really changing the way people are thinking, even in its infancy with 40-some schools. It is changing the way the school divisions go about ordering supplies and when they deliver certain things.

It really causes a whole change in thinking that has taken maybe hundreds of years to evolve: that certain things in schools happen at certain times of the year. Back to school is always in late August or September. Back to school now may be July 1. Swimming lessons may happen in October now instead of July for some kids. What it has done is open up all kinds of avenues, I think, for other entrepreneurs and certainly for the related organizations that provide youth services in most communities, be it the recreation agencies, the scouting organizations or whatever; churches to some degree. How about vacation Bible school or church school in the

summer? Maybe we have to do two groups of it now. We have to do it at certain times.

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For every action, I guess, there is a reaction. It goes far beyond the confines of the school and the school system. It vibrates throughout the whole community when you do it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And there has been no complaint. I know one of the factors that has been raised with us is that because there is that ripple effect and the tail wags the dog in some ways in terms of educational structure, it will be hard for society to adjust. You are finding that in fact they need to be aware of it–

Mr. Horyna: They are adjusting very well. The interesting thing that has happened–and we kind of use this, I guess–is that some of the worst detractors in some of the communities, some originally really outspoken, vocal, antagonistic folks, are now some of the very strongest, and most vocal, active supporters. It is interesting when you get one of those, because there is nothing worse than a convert. I mean, they are zealots about it: "I used to hate this and think it wouldn't work. Now it's the most wonderful thing; and my warts went away and I'm going to live longer." There are outrageous kinds of testimonials about it.

Madam Chairman: If any of the boards here decide to go into year-round, perhaps you could offer those names so they could import them to give the testimonials.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes, especially about warts.

Madam Chairman: Larry, on behalf of the committee I would like to thank you for giving of your time and expertise and experiences. I found your talk very refreshing and honest, and I am sure we all look forward to receiving news of the research when it is available in August. It sounds like it is the most comprehensive stuff going. We will look forward with interest to that.

Mr. Horyna: Thank you very much. Again, I am just delighted and very honoured to have a chance to spend a bit of time with you here in your beautiful city.

Madam Chairman: I hope you enjoy the rest of your brief stay here.

Mr. Horyna: I was telling Monica this morning that I did grow up in Ontario, but it was Ontario, Oregon.

Madam Chairman: Which may have a few slight differences.

Mr. Horyna: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Thank you again.

The select committee on education shall stand adjourned till 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, at which time we shall be in camera.

The committee adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

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Gardner, Dr. Robert J. L., Assistant Chief, Legislative Research Service
Witness:
Individual Presentation:
Horyna, Larry, Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

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